CREED III

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FADE IN:

1 **EXT. BEVERLY HILLS STREETS - NIGHT (2002)** 1

...on the pristine streets of Beverly Hills. Private. Manicured. Silent. Until... headlights arrive. A TBD MUSCLE CAR prowling the streets... finally taking a turn and...

2 **EXT. CREED MANSION - NIGHT (2002)** 2

The car pulls up on the street outside Creed Mansion. The DRIVER kills the engine. Lowers the music. We can't see his face behind the glass but we can see:

He's looking up ominously, covetously, at...

3 **I/E. CREED MANSION - (2002)** 3

...where MARY-ANNE (50) stirs at the sound of the car. She knows it. Alighting with suspicion, she walks down a HALLWAY lined with family photographs -- APOLLO. ADONIS. Her two BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN. Finally, she arrives upon...

A BEDROOM DOOR. She silently creeps it open and...

4 **I/E. CREED MANSION - ADONIS'S BEDROOM - (2002)** 4

Light falls through the room illuminating a kitted out bedroom. VIDEO GAMES by the TV. A closet full of JORDANS. SPORTS MEDALS, DODGERS' GEAR, COMICS all over. Not a bad looking life.

A VINTAGE "RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE" TICKET sits on a desk and beneath it, the light from the hall finally lands upon...

YOUNG ADONIS CREED (15) -- asleep in his bed.

Mary-Anne considers him a moment, before closing the door, leaving Adonis asleep. But as soon as she's gone...

Adonis's eyes dart awake. He listens to her footsteps padding off down the hall and once the coast is all clear...

Adonis gets out of bed, revealing he's already dressed. Takes the ticket off the desk, starts to open the window and...

A5 **OMITTED** A5

5 **OMITTED** 5

6 **INT. TBD MUSCLE CAR - NIGHT (2002) (NOT MOVING)** 6

Through the window, we see:

6 **CONTINUED:** 6

Young Adonis hurrying silently to the waiting MUSCLE CAR. Young Adonis jumps in and...

We finally now meet the driver. His name's DAMIAN (DAME) ANDERSON. A handsome, 18 year-old kid with the swagger of a fighter. He and Adonis pound fists in the parked car.

DAMIAN
Was 'bout to roll without you.
(cranking the new stereo)
Whatchu think?

YOUNG ADONIS
Yeah, it's nice. But they find out how you paid for it, they'll send your ass back to jail.

DAMIAN
We couldn't all get the mansion.
C'mon. Let's roll.

Off Adonis, excited as Damian roars on the engine and...

7 **I/E. TBD MUSCLE CAR - NIGHT / MOVING (2002)** 7

Damian drives from Bel Air to South LA. Adonis takes in the surroundings. Mansions give way to track houses. Poverty. The dual lives Adonis lives is strikingly clear as...

8 **EXT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING) - (2002)** 8

(*NOTE: THIS FOLLOWING SEQUENCE IS A ONER)*

Damian's car pulls up to a large FORMER ICE SKATING RINK in South LA and the boys hop out. The parking lot's jumping. MUSIC plays. There's a LINE OUT THE MAIN DOOR where GUESTS wait to pass through a METAL DETECTOR.

Young Adonis grabs DAME'S GYM BAG from the backseat and with a nod from Young Dame, they bypass the main entrance and...

Approach a SIDE DOOR which OPENS UP for the boys and Young Adonis follows Dame into...

9 **INT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - NIGHT (2002) - CONTINUOUS** 9

A bustling MULTI-USE VENUE. Young Adonis follows in Dame who daps up THE SECURITY GUARD as they enter THE FIRST ROOM where...

LOCAL BOXING ELDERS count MONEY, taking BETS...all nodding at Dame, who's clearly a favorite son here.

9 **CONTINUED:** 9

BOXING ELDERS
Damian! Young gun. There he is. See you ready to work. *

He nods with respect to them all. Puts his arm around Adonis.

DAMIAN
Appreciate you. Look out for him too. My little bro, Donnie's next.

Young Adonis beams at this praise, awing at his friend's prowess as they pass through this chaotic subculture into...

A HALLWAY where a BARBER trims up a FIGHTER right before he goes out. Dame calls out to a BARBER.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
You got me next?

The Barber waves back. Adonis clocks it all with excitement as they now pass through into...

A GALLEY KITCHEN / SNACK BAR where CUSTOMERS eat. The sounds of VENUE beginning to bleed in as...

The boys bank a right, where a GIRL crosses their path. In unison, they turn to check her out and the camera catches...

The front door the boys passed where GUESTS enter through the METAL DETECTORS and SECURITY GUARDS and...

The boys now bank left passing BALLROOM TABLES and SEATS where MANY PEOPLE eat, clearing plates as we finally see...

THE MAIN ROOM where a GOLDEN GLOVES BOXING NIGHT underway. On one side is a STAGE with badges, sponsored signage. Benches, a few tables, and rowed seating where...

A FULL HOUSE OF FIGHT FANS cheer on TWO WELTER WEIGHT FIGHTERS duking it out in THE RING.

Adonis is in heaven but...

In the crowd, we spot YOUNG LIL' DUKE who is clocking the boys. Not happy with what he's seen. He beelines for Adonis just as...

A PHOTOGRAPHER rolls up on them, memorializing the moment.

PHOTOGRAPHER
(to Dame)
You're up next.

9 CONTINUED: (2) 9

He snaps a PHOTO of the two boys just as Duke arrives.

LIL' DUKE
Yo, your mom know you here?

DAMAIN
(before D can respond)
Chill out. Donnie here's a big boy. He don't need a hall pass from her.

LIL' DUKE
Look like I was talking to you?

They stand off for a beat. Dame ends it with a laugh and heads out. Donnie follows. With a last word from Duke.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)
Watch yourself, son.

Adonis nods and departs. Duke lingering with concern as...

10 **INT. STORAGE CLOSET, G. GLOVE VENUE - MOMENTS LATER (2002)** 10

In an storage closet repurposed as a locker room, Young Adonis unpacks Dame's bag as Dame gets a clean up from the BARBER.

DAME
Who we got tonight?

From out of the bag, Adonis pulls out a NOTEBOOK. Inside, a handwritten SCOUTING REPORT. Adonis knows it by heart.

ADONIS
Rashaud Graham. Lefty. Said he's gonna be the first cat to knock you out.
(they both laugh)
Tore his labrum last year playing football for Paley so -- you know how to take him.

Damian nods, *yeah I do.* Adonis knows what to do. He goes back into the bag where among the GLOVES and GEAR he spots:

A HANDGUN. Adonis regards it a beat, then moves onto his target. AN ENVELOPE FULL OF CASH. Adonis places the money in a SPIT BUCKET and...

11 **INT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - MOMENTS LATER (2002)** 11

As Dame enters the ring, we follow Adonis and THE BUCKET, walking through the ringside seats. He approaches A BOOKIE in the center of the action and...

11 **CONTINUED:** 11

With a handshake and a whisper, Adonis deftly slips him the money. This is not missed by Duke, watching warily from afar as Adonis takes his place in Dame's corner as the fight's about to start and...

12 **INT. GOLDEN GLOVES VENUE - MOMENTS LATER** 12

The bout is now underway. Damian wears out HIS OPPONENT with a combination of power and skill that's astounding for his age. He's vicious. The only good comp is Tyson and...

Putting on a real show, Dame steals a look at Adonis as if saying -- "*watch this*" -- and then...

BOOM! He unleashes a STRAIGHT RIGHT that knocks his opponent clean out and the crowd all goes nuts. Nobody more than... *

Adonis, whooping it up for Dame, proud of his brother and...

DAMIAN (PRE-LAP)
Straight right. Boom! That's the punch. *Clean.* Simple. Perfect. * *

13 **I/E. TBD MUSCLE CAR - HOURS LATER (2002)** 13

Still amped up from his win, Damian and Adonis drive home, speeding past A POLICE CRUISER ON THE STREET.

At the wheel, Dame waves the MONEY he's just won in his hand.

DAMIAN
First thing I do, when I win me that belt, I'm gonna get me a big ass chain. Flooded with diamonds. Feel me?... I'mma get you one too.

He hands Adonis some bills from his stack. Adonis is touched.

YOUNG ADONIS
Actually, I gotchu something. It belonged to my pops. It's original.

From his bag, he hands Damian the VINTAGE TICKET from the real "Rumble in the Jungle". Dame's moved. Throws his arm around Adonis, like a chivalrous big brother...

DAMIAN
I'mma get there one day. Know where we gotta train? Up in Big Bear, up north. I been reading about it. All the great fighters go. It's high up. No distractions just...
(off Adonis's look)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 **CONTINUED:** 13

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
You'll be with me. Don't worry.
Someone's gotta carry my bag.

Young Adonis laughs. Beaming. A last moment of calm before...

YOUNG ADONIS
You just see who that was?

Dame slows as out the window they pass A DRUNK MAN (40's) loitering outside a LIQUOR STORE. Adonis' face goes dark.

YOUNG ADONIS (CONT'D)
Turn around.

At the next light, Damian makes a U-TURN and pulls over by the liquor store. He's not in the mood for this shit. But Adonis is already getting out of the car as...

DAMIAN
Come on Adonis. Yo! -- *Dang*! *

14 **EXT. CRENSHAW LIQUOR STORE - MOMENTS LATER (2002)** 14

Adonis is moving quick on a mission. Rolling up on the Drunk.

ADONIS
You remember me, homie?

The Drunk frightens with recognition at the sight of Adonis. But before he can even respond... BOOM!

Adonis is already swinging, punching the Drunk in the face with incredible anger, continuing with a flurry of blows that drops the man to the ground where the beating continues as...

FROM INSIDE THE LIQUOR STORE, three of the drunk's FRIENDS see the attack and rush to his aide, converging over...

Adonis, still blind with rage, continuing to pummel the Drunk as the men pull him off, ready to stomp his ass out until...

DAMIAN
Yo! Step back. Let him go.

They all turn to see Damian, emerging from the car, flashing THE GUN FROM HIS BAG. And now everyone freezes. A long heated beat. Adonis still seeing red when...

WHOOP! WHOOP! Sirens flash. Police pulling fast down the street. Adonis and Dame share a look. Only one thing to do...

RUN! Adonis takes off, sprinting down an alley way from the cops, but turns back in horror to see...

14 **CONTINUED:** 14

TWO COPS rushing in wrestling Damian to the ground. He looks up from the pavement as they slap on the cuffs and sees...

Adonis backing away -- helpless and afraid -- guilt and fear in his eyes -- taking off into the shadows, leaving his friend in the past, running for his young life as we...

MATCH CUT TO:

15 **OMITTED** 15

16 **EXT. CAPE TOWN STADIUM - NIGHT** 16

17 YEARS LATER: ADONIS CREED (32) -- now the HEAVY WEIGHT CHAMP -- fighting for his life in the ring against recently released ex-con, RICKY CONLAN.

TBD DAZN ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Conlan's looking dominant. Just like when they last met, he's still punishing the Champ.

It's already ROUND 3 in the PACKED OUTDOOR STADIUM, "CREED ATHLETICS" BRANDING ALL OVER, and to everybody in the SOLD OUT CROWD's surprise, Adonis is taking a beating.

TBD DAZN ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Creed suffered his only defeat when these two fighters first met, but if he doesn't do some thing fast, he looks headed here for another.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Conlan works Adonis with a barrage of big blows. The same combo on repeat. Two to the body. One to the head. Two to the body. One to the head. A lot landing clean.

CONLAN
Yeah boy. I'm still a problem!

Cause Adonis hardly throws in return. He just covers up. Making his corner enraged. DUKE and STITCH screaming out.

LIL' DUKE
Use that jab! Keep him back.

But Adonis just takes it. Absorbing blow after blow like a glutton for punishment until the BELL finally RINGS, pausing the carnage for now.

CONLAN
Next round's gonna hurt.

16 **CONTINUED:** 16

The fighter's head back to their corners. BIANCA cheers for Adonis from ringside as Conlan takes a seat, feeling good, like he's got this in the bag but...

17 **EXT. CREED'S CORNER, CAPETOWN STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 3** 17

Duke and STITCH are surprised to see that Adonis is smiling.

LIL' DUKE
Whatchu smiling for, man? You gettin' beat worse than the last time. I miss something, this funny?

ADONIS
Check mate.

LIL' DUKE
(beat, now catching up)
Check mate...?

'Cause they all know what this means. Adonis just cracked the Matrix and is enjoying this moment with the delight of a kid.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)
Sure you wanna do that? You ain't no spring chicken.

ADONIS
I ain't afraid of a lil' contact. Stitch, get that ice ready.

And now Duke's smiling too as - DING! DING! - there's the bell and Adonis is on his feet, throwing a look to BIANCA who knows exactly what's up and signs to him with a smile.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Put him on his ass.

Adonis can't hold back his smile as...

TBD DAZN ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
This is dangerous now. Creed's gonna have to be careful.

18 **EXT. CAPETOWN STADIUM - RING - ROUND 4** 18

Because Conlan comes out, delivering more of the same. But, this time we get the sense Adonis has an ace up his sleeve.

When Conlan starts laying wood, going back to that combo -- TWO TO THE BODY. ONE TO HEAD -- we see Adonis is counting. Calculating the rhythm. Taking punches as we understand...

18 **CONTINUED:** 18

Adonis is laying a trap. Taking one to give two. So the next time Conlan throws the COMBO, connecting with Creed's face...

Adonis takes it on purpose. Sliding his face off the glove. His eyes opening now, a little smirk on his mouth 'cause he sees what he's been waiting for...

Conlan's left his flank exposed and then... BAM! Adonis shifts his weight to the left, ripping a hook to Conlan's open body that breaks Ricky's ribs loudly and...

Conlan covers his pain. HIS CORNER yelling out loud...

CONLAN TRAINER
Guard! Get up top!

And Conlan can only react, covering his face with his gloves, anticipating the head shot from Adonis but...

That punch never comes. Instead, Adonis is shifting now to the right, where Conlan's just exposed his left kidney and...

BOOM! Adonis delivers a huge body right that drops Conlan down to a knee, before crashing straight to the mat and...

The ref gives a TEN-COUNT and just like that, it's all done. Adonis, raising his hands as the whole place explodes.

TBD DAZN ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
That's it folks. It's over. What a chess move from Creed! For the first time in twenty years, there's an undisputed, heavyweight champion of the world! Adonis Creed!

And it's bedlam as Adonis raises his belt. Bianca beside him. In the flash of the cameras. On the top of the world and...

19 **INT. MEDIA ROOM, CAPE TOWN STADIUM - HOURS LATER** 19

...the cameras still flash as Adonis, dressed now like he's on the cover of GQ, sits at the podium for the post match PRESS CONFERENCE. The questions coming already.

REPORTERS (O.S.)
How's it feel matching your father?
Who're you going to fight next?

Adonis lets all these pass. Bianca, at his side like a Queen. Duke, watching close by. But despite this stage, this victory, the CREED PROMOTIONS backdrop behind him, Adonis is nervous. Clears his throat.

19 **CONTINUED:** 19

ADONIS
Before I take any questions, I got a statement to read.
(reading)
For the past seven years, I've got to live out my dreams. I'm incredibly grateful, because I didn't have to do it alone. All these people beside me...
(Duke, Bianca)
...supported me the whole way. They helped me grow, helped me build this life, had my back every step and I want to make sure I'm around to do the exact same for them.
(beat)
Most people in this sport don't get to choose how it ends. I know that more than anyone. That's why tonight, I'm officially announcing my retirement from Professional Boxing. This was my last fight.

And the room just explodes. Everyone shouting at once. Everyone in disbelief. Off Adonis and Bianca, in the blinding flash of the cameras, we CUT TO:

20 **EXT. LOS ANGELES - ESTABLISHING (THREE YEARS LATER)** 20

Among various shots of Los Angeles, we see a PAINTED MURAL of ADONIS and APOLLO on a wall. Two hometown champs, leading us to...

21-28 **OMITTED** 21-28

A29 **EXT. ADONIS & BIANCA'S MANSION - DAY (ESTABLISHING)** A29

A sweeping Bel Air estate. Luxury cars in the drive and...

B29 **EXT. ADONIS & BIANCA'S MANSION - BACKYARD - DAY** B29 *

In the breathtaking backyard with views of the Getty, we see Adonis' new life.

He's sitting poolside with Amara (now 6) -- both of them covered in PAINT -- as they work on duel paintings. Adonis is... isn't great. But Amara's is something.

It shows two boxers in a ring and a third smaller fighter.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Looking good. And who's that?

B29 **CONTINUED:** B29

AMARA (SIGNING)
Uncle Felix.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
And who's that?

AMARA (SIGNING)
Drago?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
(laughs)
Ok. Who's this little one here?

AMARA (SIGNING)
That's me. Can't you tell?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Oh, you knocked both of them out?

AMARA (SIGNING)
I'm the champ.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Yeah you are. Finish up. Looks like we both need a bath.

Amara smiles, drenched in paint, having the time of her life with her dad and --

C29 **OMITTED** C29

D29 **INT. BIANCA'S HOME STUDIO, A & B MANSION - LATER THAT NIGHT** D29

Adonis, still flecked in paint, enters a NEW-AGEY HOME STUDIO where Bianca's at work, INCENSE BURNING on the keyboard.

All around, there is evidence of her LABEL -- BROAD STREET RECORDS -- and artwork and designs for her upcoming event.

She is adding some keys to a song (*we'll hear later*) when...

ADONIS
Got you working late tonight, huh? That's the new track for SZA?

BIANCA
Yeah -- had a couple ideas.

She turns to find her husband, covered in paint stains on his clothes.

D29 **CONTINUED:** D29

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Looks like you two had a good day. Thanks for holding it down. You get her to bed?

ADONIS
Girl was wiped. Not sure how? She had like six scoops of ice creams.

BIANCA
Looks like you had a few too?

She's referring to paint on his shirt, making fun.

ADONIS
Nah, we were painting. You saw.

BIANCA
Mmmhmm. You oughta take that off. It'll stain.

ADONIS
Now I see what you're doing. Trying to get me naked. A'ight.

And he's removing his shirt. And she's laughing now 'cause--

BIANCA
Nah, nah -- come on. Don't! Adonis, I'm working. Come on.

ADONIS
Yeah, I've been working hard too. What, you don't like this dad bod? I'll get back in shape, quit promoting.

BIANCA
Don't you go and change nothing. I like you just like you are... Come over here with that dad bod.

And they're laughing...then kissing. Passionate and in love. Still a big fire here. Moving down to the floor as WE CUT TO:

E29 **INT. CITY BUS - DAY (MOVING)** E29

A city bus slowing to a stop and we follow the SILHOUETTE OF LARGE MAN moving down the aisle toward the door where...

29 **EXT. LEIMERT PARK - DAY** 29

His WEATHERED SHOES step off the bus and onto the sidewalk of a desolate block. Not quite tumbleweeds rolling, but that's the feeling as...

Around the man's ankle we see an ELECTRONIC TRACKING MONITOR. Booming up we discover it is locked to the leg of...

A POWERFULLY BUILT BLACK MAN (36). In his hand, a small weathered NOTEBOOK AND PEN.

The bus pulls away, leaving him alone on the street staring at a vaguely familiar, though NOW VACANT STOREFRONT.

He crosses to MAGAZINE STAND where A HISPANIC MOTHER shops with her CHILD, who's covetously eyeing the candy.

The man sidles up to the stand, and while the SHOPKEEPER's distracted, he deftly palms a CANDY and slips it to the kid, winking to keep it hush hush. As the kid lights up with joy --

SHOPKEEPER
Can I help you with something?

MAN
Yeah, let me get that.

The man points to a MAGAZINE ON THE RACK: Adonis, in a power-suit on the cover of FORBES. The shopkeeper delivers it.

MAN (CONT'D)
(nods to the storefront)
Wasn't that his gym over there?

SHOPKEEPER
Moved to a bigger spot, round the corner. Couple years now at least. Can I get you anything else?

MAN
Nah, keep the change.

The man lays down his cash, a last look at CEO Adonis as...

A30 **INT. DELPHI GYM - ADONIS' OFFICE - DAY** A30 *

Adonis tries to focus on his work, but is distracted by memorabilia from his boxing career. Meanwhile in the gym... *

*

30 **INT. DELPHI GYM - DAY** 30 *

BAM! A PUNCH FLIES IN A RING, SLAMMING A BOXER'S FACE in the gym where FELIX CHAVEZ, an impressive, all business MEXICAN fighter in CREED ATHLETICS GEAR, wears out a SPARRING PARTNER. Sharp, efficient blows until the weary PARTNER taps out. *

ANOTHER SPARRING PARTNER reluctantly climbs in for his turn to be punished and... *

A FEW MOMENTS LATER *

Felix is now beating PARTNER TWO to a pulp as in his corner, Lil' Duke coaches alongside Felix's mother, a cerebral "fight mom" named LAURA (40s). *

LIL DUKE *
Take away distance! Cut off the ring. *
Cut it off! *

LAURA *
Stick and move. Stick and move. *
Muévete. Muévete. *

They all instruct as Felix lands a flurry of punches until the bell finally rings, sparing partner two more pain. The guy's been through hell. *

FELIX *
You ok? Good shit man. Good work. *

Partner Two nods he's all right, but can't get himself off his stool. We've seen the last of him in this gym. *

Pulling back, we reveal that a CAMERA CREW for "SHOWTIME: ALL ACCESS" is filming for a Pre-Fight package. Felix climbs out from the ropes, immediately whispering to his mother. *

FELIX (CONT'D) *
Think we need a new batch. *

LAURA *
Duke's trying. It's hard. You've *
chewed through most of LA. *

FELIX *
You want me to pull back? Think *
Drago's taking it easy? He's not gonna *
be able to handle these moves. *

He starts dancing with Laura, absolutely dripping with sweat. *

30 **CONTINUED:** 30

LAURA
What're you doing? Watch out?!

FELIX
Come on! I learned 'em from you.

Laura can't help laugh, dancing with her son. Inside the ring, he's a killer. But outside the ropes, still her boy.

FELIX (CONT'D)
Wanna get in on this, Champ? Know you miss wearing these gloves.
(TBD Alt)

Reveal Adonis, in an IMPECCABLY TAILORED SUIT, seated at a CAMERA SET-UP, getting mic'd up for an interview.

ADONIS
Mess up this suit? I don't think so. Trying to get you guys paid.
(to the SOUND GUY)
This good? We all set?

31 **INT. DELPHI GYM - A SHORT WHILE LATER** 31

Adonis, Duke, Laura, and Felix (CHAMPIONSHIP BELT on his shoulder) sit for an ON CAMERA INTERVIEW with the PRODUCER, mid question...

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER
Felix, what're you out to prove in this title defense against Drago?

FELIX
We're building a legacy. Same as these two here built. Lotta people I want to provide for.

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER
Your whole career you've dealt with doubts about your size as a Heavyweight. Your promoter, Adonis Creed, fought Drago - and even he was a larger fighter than you. Yet here you sit with a belt strapped around your shoulder... Is beating Drago a way to finally shut the doubters up?

FELIX
(this pokes a wound)
Man, that's the same story every fight I've ever had.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

31 **CONTINUED:** 31

FELIX (CONT'D)
I don't care about size, I got heart! *
I didn't get here by accident! *
(to his mother) *
Pinche... *

LAURA *
(cools him off) *
Mijo. *
(back to the reporter) *
People have lost a lot betting against *
my son. *

The next question goes to Duke and Adonis. *

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER *
How does Creed Athletic's fit into all *
that? *

LIL' DUKE *
(Give him some more,.. MBJ *
to build off it) *
I handle the fighters. Adonis handles *
the business, but we do it together. *
We're partners. *
(*alt lines TBD*) *

ADONIS *
These fighters trust us with their *
futures and we don't take lightly. *
(re: Felix and Laura) *
These two are family. We love em. *
And we wanna help all our fighters *
build more than careers. *

LAURA *
I've known since Felix was young that *
he was a Champion. But no one else *
believed before Adonis and Duke. *

ALL ACCESS PRODUCER *
(now back to Adonis) *
What was it you saw in him? Talent? *
Physicality? *
(alt Question) *
How does it feel being on the other *
side of the ropes? You miss it? *

Adonis takes a long beat to consider. *

31 CONTINUED: (2) 31

ADONIS
It takes more than that to be a champion. You gotta know it in here. Before anyone else.
(*TBD Alt Response*) *

32 **EXT. DELPHI GYM - AFTERNOON** 32

The interview wrapped, Adonis exits the gym on the phone. *

ADONIS
I understand exact what they're asking. Drago may has the bigger name, but Felix has the belt. His split's got to bigger. I care if they don't like it. Tell Drago to call me. Then tell his dad to call me, I don't care. Let me call you back. *

Adonis hangs up the phone -- spotting a man, leaning casually on the hood of his car. The same man from the MAGAZINE STAND. *

ADONIS (CONT'D) *
Hey my man you lost Can I help you? *

MAN *
Let me get an autograph. *

ADONIS *
I ain't signing any auto-- *

Adonis turns, spotting a man, leaning casually on the hood of his car. The same man from the MAGAZINE STAND.

MAN
Yo homie, you don't remember me? You come a long way from bumming rides from your moms but... *

ADONIS
...Dame? *
(holy shit)
You almost had me. *

DAMIAN
Just got back to the hood. Stop by the old gym but... *

Adonis, still floored. A wave of memories pounding.

32 **CONTINUED:** 32

ADONIS
Yeah we just moved in a couple of years ago. / Yeah we upgraded a couple of years ago. *

DAMIAN
It's been a minute. For sure.

That's an understatement. A few lifetimes have passed since these two men last met. An awkward silence returns. *

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
...I didn't want to take up any of your time. Just wanted to let you know I what's good. That I'm here.You ever wanna hang out catch up, grab some chow, whatever. Just let me know *

ADONIS
Where you headed now? *

DAMIAN
Shit, back to the crib. If I ain't back by six then -- BOOM -- this whole block'll blow up. *

Adonis clocks Damian's leg. The ANKLE MONITOR. *

ADONIS
Got time to get something to eat?/ Time to get some grub? *

DAMIAN
What you say? /Say it again? *

ADONIS
Got time to get some grub/food\. *

The two old friends share a laugh then...

33-34 **OMITTED** 33-34

A35 **INT. LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT** A35 *

Just like years ago, Adonis and Dame enter through the backstage corridors of an establishment. Only this time, Adonis is the VIP leading the way...

They pass through a kitchen door, emerging into a restaurant, passing tables and BAR COOKS and a LINE at the door...

HOSTESS *
Good see you man. *

A35 **CONTINUED:** A35

ADONIS *
Good seeing you. Tony! *

(CONTINUED)

A35 CONTINUED: (2) A35

Damian clocks Adonis' stature as they're seated at a prime TABLE, bypassing the other still waiting guests and...

HOSTESS
Champ, I got you right here. You guys enjoy.

35 **INT. LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT - LATER** 35

Adonis and Damian, mirror images of each other, sit across a table waiting for their food to arrive.

DAMIAN
Surprised you still come down here and eat with the common folk.

ADONIS
When I can./ Try to. There's a lot of things I use to do, that I just can't do anymore.

DAMIAN
Busy living that high life?

ADONIS
Yeah, something like that.

ADONIS (ALT)
Yeah man, it is what it is. / (o.s.) Part of the job.

Adonis is self conscious and relieved when the WAITRESS arrives with their food. Before they dig in...

Adonis slides the SALT SHAKER and HOT SAUCE to Dame. Dame's amused he remembered, starts shoveling the food down.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
(playful)
Damn. Easy, easy.

DAMIAN
Know how long it's been since I had this shit?

Dame laughs. Adonis regards him, emotional.

ADONIS
(genuine)
How long?

DAME
Eighteen years.

ADONIS
Shit. You been down this whole time?

35 **CONTINUED:** 35

DAMIAN
(nods)
Had some years get tacked on. Just got out last week. *

ADONIS
Congratulations. (os) Welcome home/back. *

DAMIAN
I wrote you a few/couple times. Guess you never got get ‘em. *

ADONIS
Really? Nah, bro. I didn’t. Where’d you send ‘em?

DAMIAN
Mama Creed’s.
(pointed silence)
She still up in Bel Air?

ADONIS	ADONIS (ALT)
Yeah, man. She’s getting up there but she’s around.	Yes, she’s still there. Same house. Just as stubborn as ever. She’s not leaving that home. (she ain’t going no where)

DAMIAN
(changing the subject)
You know I seen everyone of your fight in the pen. See you made it to Africa, huh? *

ADONIS
You saw/seen that? / *

DAMIAN
Saw/seen that. Made me proud. See you remembered some of those moves that I taught you, too. *

ADONIS
What I remember you knocking my ass out. *

DAMIAN
But you remember me picking your ass up./Remember me helping you back up? *

Adonis nods, remembering. Sees Dame’s notebook on the table. *

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (2) 35

ADONIS *
Yeah you did. Whatcha doing for work? *
/You got work? *

DAMIAN *
I got some plans. Keep my nose clean. *
Keep the PO off my back. *

ADONIS
Anything I can do to help, just ask. *

Dame slows for a moment. Adonis misunderstands...

Adonis reaches into his suit pocket and pulls out a thick wad * of HUNDREDS before Dame can even finish his thought. *

ADONIS (CONT'D)
What am I talking about. You just *
came home. I got to get you right. *
Whatever you need. Aight. *

DAMIAN *
I appreciate it bro, I'm good. I *
situated. *

Adonis extends him the cash but Dame won't take the bait.

ADONIS *
I didn't mean it like that. Respect. *
So what's your plan? *

DAMIAN
Same program I was on the last time *
you seen/saw me. *
(beat)
I want to be champ.

Adonis is taken aback.

ADONIS
You still trying/wanna to box? *

DAMIAN
I know I've been away a long time, but
I kept myself fit. Got some moves you *
ain't seen yet. *

ADONIS
You looking decent. Solid. *

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (3) 35

DAMIAN
Donnie I'm ready. I'm not joking, bruh. Still got gas in the tank. And gotta get me that chain... can't be Diamond Dame looking bummy!

The guys laughs, but Adonis can feel his desperation so...

ADONIS
Diamond Dame. That's right. All right. Come by the gym, get you set up with Duke. See what happens from there.

DAMIAN
For real? I appreciate it, bro. Thank you. Yo, this steak's hitting/banging too.

Dame returns to his plate. Adonis eyes his old friend and...

36 **INT. CREED MANSION - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT** 36

Still in his feelings, Adonis enters Creed Mansion to find Mary-Anne braiding Amara's hair in front of the TV while Bianca pours more wine. They are giggling hysterically.

ADONIS
What's so funny?

BIANCA
Just trying to convince your mom to come stay with us so she can do my hair too.

MARY-ANNE
Careful what you wish for.

Adonis gives his mom a hug and kiss.

ADONIS
How you feeling today?

MARY-ANNE
Fine. Better if my son showed up on time for dinner.

ADONIS
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I ran into a fighter I hadn't seen in a minute.

36 **CONTINUED:** 36

MARY-ANNE
Oh yeah? Musta been somebody important.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2) 36

She cuts an inquisitive look at Adonis, then returns to Amara, finishing her hair with a flourish.

MARY-ANNE (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
There. Look at that.
(then privately to Amara)
Who's the real the champ in this family?

AMARA (SIGNING)
You are.

MARY-ANNE
No. You. -- Go see for yourself.

Amara runs out with a smile to get check out her hair, leaving Adonis with Bianca and Mary-Anne.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
Gonna have your hands full with that one.

BIANCA
Think we already do.

They laugh. Mary-Anne eyes the wine, then Adonis - to pour.

ADONIS
You sure you should be drinking, Ms. Lady?

MARY-ANNE
I'm not gonna have another stroke *tonight,* Adonis.

ADONIS
I'm just saying.

BIANCA
You had us worried the other day.

MARY-ANNE
I'm fine. I'm fine. Enough people worrying about me. What's going on with you?
(as he shifts)
I know your face. You got something on your mind.

Bianca picks up Mary-Anne's curiosity...

BIANCA
Who'd you run into tonight?

36 **CONTINUED: (3)** 36

ADONIS
(trapped)
This guy Damian Anderson.

MARY-ANNE
Damian?

Bianca clocks the moment between Adonis and his mother.

BIANCA
Who's he?

ADONIS
(a long beat)
Just an old fighter.

Off Mary-Anne's look...

37 **INT. DELPHI GYM - A FEW DAYS LATER** 37 *

Dame's gearing up in the ring. All around him, YOUNG FIGHTERS train, throwing condescending looks at the old fighter. *

DUKE (O.S.) *
Think you mighta checked with me? *

ON DUKE AND ADONIS at GIFT SHOP watching Dame get warmed up. *

DUKE (CONT'D) *
This ain't no charity, Donnie. Homie's older than *you*. *

ADONIS *
I'm just giving him a break. Ain't that what we do anyway? *

DUKE *
No. This ain't no damn YMCA. *

As Duke clocks Dame. *

ADONIS *
Look around. You see anybody else lining up to get in the ring with Felix? All I'm saying is, let him spar. That's it. We got a fight coming up and zero bodies... Absolutely no one wants to get in the ring with Felix. *

Off Duke's skepticism... *

DUKE, *
I know what you're doin' Donnie. You don't owe this dude shit. But you wanna spar? Let's do this. *

Dukes leaves to talk to Felix. Adonis chews on that. He goes over to tell Damian the news. *

Felix runs drills with female boxer, Laura watches. Duke enters... *

DUKE *
Felix, so Adonis brought someone in for you to spar with. *

FELIZ *
It's about time. *

Adonis goes over to Damian... *

(CONTINUED)

37 **CONTINUED:** 37

ADONIS
Hey, hey, we good.

DAMIAN
Lotta young cats in here.

ADONIS
Young man's game. Come on, Duke's going to take care of you. Champs gotta start somewhere.

Dame gets into the ring. He is surprised to see Felix climb in the ring. Lil' Duke at his side. Dame stares at the golden boy. Not exactly what he'd asked...

DUKE
Felix. Meet Damian. Gonna be sparring with you.
(to Dame)
You still know how to do that?

Off Dame, biting his tongue for now as... DING DING!

38 **INT. DELPHI GYM - BOXING RING - A SHORT WHILE LATER** 38

Felix bounces around on the opposite side of the ring, sizing up Damian who's struggling to get his headgear to stay put.

Duke and Laura are coaching as and Adonis look on.

FELIX
Go ahead and take your time.
(clocks the ANKLE MONITOR)
Where you from?

DAMIAN
Crenshaw.

Felix clocks Damian's ANKLE MONITOR.

FELIX
That cute. How long did you do?

DAMIAN
A minute. You ready?

FELIX
Hell yeah. / That's dope, Crenshaw.

They close in on each other and the session begins. Damian lets go a quick combination, about half-speed.

38 **CONTINUED:** 38

DUKE *
Give him a good look now, Dame. We *
just warming up. *

Damian sends a jab Felix's way but he slips it and lands a * STIFF one-two on Damian. Oohs and Ahhs from the gym. *

LAURA *
Don't let up. Keep pressing. *

Damian starts to grasp the role he's been given: Human * punching bag. Not pleased, he throws a quick look to Adonis * who consoles him to stick with it so -- *

Dame swallows his pride and lets Felix proceed to wail the * shit out of him. Dame takes the blows like a man accustomed * to pain as -- *

A39 **INT. PLAY SPACE, AMARA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY** A39

Amara's facing a battle of her own. She's DRAWING at a table (*in a school for the deaf*) when a BIGGER BOY, on some dare, snatches her picture and rips it in half.

He's only laughing for a second because -- BAM! -- Amara punches him in the face, continues pummeling him on the ground as other DEAF CHILDREN scatter and a TEACHER rushes in, having to pull her away and--

39 **INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, AMARA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER** 39

Amara sits in a classroom, awaiting her punishment while...

Adonis and Bianca meet with her DEAF TEACHER in an observation room. They can see their daughter through a two-way mirror.

TEACHER (SIGNING)
...I spoke to the other family. You're welcome to call them if you like but...it sounds like he had ripped her picture in class and obviously, she got very upset.

The teacher hands the parents Amara's ART WORK: The now-ripped painting that Amara worked on with Adonis. It's got Adonis' blood boiling.

TEACHER (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Again, nobody was hurt but --

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Wait why's this kid picking on her?

(CONTINUED)

39 **CONTINUED:** 39

Bianca reaches a hand out to Adonis -- *be cool*.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
(speaking to Bianca)
Nah, I'm just asking.

39 CONTINUED: (2) 39

Bianca gestures to Adonis -- *not cool*. "You need to sign."

ADONIS (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

TEACHER (SIGNING)
I don't think it was personal. He was probably just trying to get some attention but --

ADONIS (SIGNING)
So why's my daughter in trouble? These kids are picking on her -- she can't stand up for herself?

Aware a nerve has been touched, Bianca steps in to diffuse.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Obviously we're concerned about Amara feeling comfortable here, but we understand fighting isn't the way to handle things.

Adonis look says -- *we are?*

TEACHER (SIGNING)
Look, we love Amara. She's an exceptional child and academically, she's thriving, she just... fights. All the time. And we want her to know there are other solutions.

Bianca throws a look at Adonis, biting his tongue until...

40 **INT. HALLWAY, AMARA'S SCHOOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER** 40

Adonis, still real hot, is hustling out of the building. Amara believes she's in trouble. Bianca's at their side.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Remember what we talked about? When you start getting worked up, just slow down and take a breath. Check in with yourself.

AMARA (SIGNING)
I'm sorry.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Don't apologize. You have a right to fight back.

Amara brightens a little.

40 **CONTINUED:** 40

ADONIS (SIGNING, CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Maybe it's time we go to the gym and teach you a few things. What do you think?

Off Amara's excitement and Bianca's displeasure...

BIANCA (PRE-LAP)
That's your advice? You wanna teach her to fight?

41 **INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA'S NEW BEL AIR MANSION - NIGHT** 41

Bianca and Adonis, in a heated discussion, arrange a dinner that their chef has prepared. A pretty incongruous sight.

ADONIS
I thought she wouldn't have to at a deaf school like that but now--

BIANCA
C'mon, Adonis. Kids are kids. What'd you expect?

ADONIS
Then she should know how to defend herself --

BIANCA
No one is telling her not to but --

ADONIS
-- and if we get pissed at her now and let people walk over her, she's just gonna grow up being scared --

BIANCA
Where is *that* coming from?

Adonis waves her off but Bianca holds him. Diffusing this.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
All I'm saying, Adonis, is we should be teaching her how to assess her emotions --

ADONIS
(joking)
Here we go. Therapy talk.

She laughs, busting his balls.

41 **CONTINUED:** 41

BIANCA
You're making fun of how I deal? You used to punch people to get your shit out! You want me to cancel my appointment with Wendy and just go to the gym?
(fucking with him)
You need a hobby.

They laugh. Then she gets back to point.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
I know you wanna protect her but she needs to understand *why* she's fighting, not just how to do it. Cause the solution to every problem isn't a punch in the face.

ADONIS
Yeah, well... sometimes it is.

That laugh breaks the tension, then -- DING! -- the doorbell rings. The lights flash.

BIANCA
Tell me his name again?

ADONIS
My boy Dame. I told you.

BIANCA
Actually, baby, you didn't tell me that much. Just, you hadn't spoken in awhile.

ADONIS
Well, he was in jail.

BIANCA
Oh, they don't got phones in jail?

That hits Adonis.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Don't worry. It happens. He's here now.

Then Bianca opens the door, revealing Damian in the threshold - his face, in awe of the opulence.

ADONIS
Guess you found it all right?

41 **CONTINUED: (2)** 41

DAMIAN
Just asked where the black family lives.
(a beat. He laughs)
I'm kidding. It's tight. Nice to meet you, Bianca. You got a beautiful home.

BIANCA
Nice to meet you too, Damian. Come on in!

Damian does, with a smile, taking in all their wealth and accomplishments. Photos of Bianca and HER ARTISTS. Adonis with PRESIDENTS and CELEBS.

Upstairs, he spies Amara peeking through the SEE-THROUGH FLOORS. Bianca signs up from below...

BIANCA (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Dinner time.

Amara comes running. Dame watches this all with amazement.

DAMIAN
Y'all got see-through floors too?! *
Hard to keep those things clean, *
right?

ADONIS
Haha ohhh you got jokes.

DAMIAN
You know I do. Man, that food's smelling good, Ms. Bianca.

Then he passes Amara, shooting her a big smile as she and Bianca laugh. No one talks to Adonis like this...

As she and Amara head in, Adonis sidebars with Dame.

ADONIS
Did your P.O. get in touch? Get that shit sorted out?

DAMIAN
Yeah. Hollered at me last week. Thanks for getting me right.

ADONIS
Don't sweat it. No thing.

Adonis placing a helping hand on his shoulder as...

42 **EXT. POOLSIDE, ADONIS AND BIANCA'S HOME - NIGHT** 42

Adonis, Bianca, and Dame sit poolside catching up over drinks while their CHEF clears the plates.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Thank you all. That was great.

DAMIAN
Dawg. I still can't get over this. This square got himself a whole mansion. Married a genuine rock star. All those gold records yours?

BIANCA
Mmmhmm. Artists I produced.

DAMIAN
Ah, you produce too? That's what's up. I love that song you did with Gunna. When do I get to see it live?

BIANCA
(modest)
I don't really do that anymore.

ADONIS
She's being humble. You heard of Broad Street records? She started that with her bare hands.

DAMIAN
Word?

BIANCA
Yeah, after I stopped performing, still wanted to work with artist I love so now I just take out the middle men. It's cool.

Damian's genuinely impressed by her grace and humility.

DAMIAN
Wow ok. That's impressive. Still... hard to give up that one thing that's *yours*.

BIANCA
Yeah, you know, it takes work. Lotta therapy.
(they laugh, then)
So how'd you guys meet anyway? I never get to meet any of his old friends.

42 **CONTINUED:** 42

DAMIAN
Donnie didn't tell you already? Man, we go way back. We were like brothers. Shared a room for two years at The Jeff, before your boy went and got Hollywood...

BIANCA
Oh, the Jeff. What's that?

DAMIAN
The Jeff was the Group home.
(to Adonis, casually)
Bruh, remember them bedbugs in that mug?

ADONIS
I try not to.

DAMIAN
Man. I can't forget 'em. *

Bianca clocks the moment, Adonis silence. Dame does too.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
(to Bianca)
He didn't tell you about that?

BIANCA
Naw, yeah -- I remember. That was before Mary Anne. Right?

An awkward silence. It hangs for a beat... Bianca can sense it. Checks her watch.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
I gotta get Amara to bed. You two keep catching up.
(to Adonis)
You should invite him to the label party!
(to Dame)
SZA will be there.

DAMIAN
That's very kind of you. Thanks. Great to meet you.

BIANCA
You too.

Bianca goes with a smile. As soon as the two men are alone...

42 CONTINUED: (2) 42

DAMIAN
You didn't tell her about the Jeff, huh?

ADONIS
Why would I?

A heavy moment. Adonis breaks it in a hurry.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
Come on, let's get a drink. I wanna show you something.

43 **INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA MANSION - MAN CAVE - MOMENTS LATER** 43

Adonis flips on the lights in his PRIVATE GYM / MAN CAVE. The space, a natural flex. Boxing gear. Adonis' BELTS. Virtual Golf. Full bar of top shelf. Damian regards it, mind blown.

DAMIAN
Man this is crazyyy...

Dame picks up a bottle from the bar. HENNESSY UMBRELLA BRAND PRODUCTS.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
This stuff's like three grand bro! *
(alt) *
I love this stuff. *

ADONIS
Take it.

Dame pours himself a drink, discovering a photo of Adonis in his 2nd fight against Drago. Shakes his head.

DAMIAN
Can't believe you really hung 'em up. To wear a monkey suit.

ADONIS
What- you think I got soft?

And before Damian can react, Adonis TACKLES him and they begin to grapple like wrestlers - an old boyhood routine.

DAMIAN
Ooo, oh okay that's how we playin it?

ADONIS
That's how we playin!

(CONTINUED)

43 **CONTINUED:** 43

They disengage and the two men square up for a good old fashioned SLAPBOX FIGHT. As they “Slap” at each other, they talk; both men feeling each other out as they move.

43 CONTINUED: (2) 43

DAMIAN
You really moved back to the boonies... You used to love coming back to the hood. Now you all domesticated... *
(poking fun)
I bet you golf now, too, huh?

ADONIS
I don't golf.

DAMIAN
You got a mansion in Bel Air but don't golf?
(alt)
You got a virtual golf room. Is that your butler's?

Damian laughs and then WHAP! -- Adonis catches him on the face. Everything stops on a dime.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Oh. Ok. I see. The champ's still got a little pepper in him.

Damian puts up his hands, conceding with grace.

ADONIS
Yo, I might have left boxing. But it didn't leave me.

DAMIAN
That's what *I'm* saying. Look I know you got a ship you tryna run, but I ain't come back here to be a punching bag for some chump (alt insult)-- *

ADONIS
Yo don't sleep on Felix. He earned his the hard way.

DAMIAN
I did 20 years the hard way.
(that hangs)
Maybe I didn't make myself clear: I want a title shot.

ADONIS
Bro, Felix has the belt.

DAMIAN
So line him up. If he as good as you say he is, what he got to lose?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (3) 43

That ask is a bomb drop. Adonis searches for a response.

ADONIS
It don't work like that, bruh. I can't just snap my fingers and make you a contender.

DAMIAN
Ain't that what happened to you?

A low blow. A long beat. Damian tries to walk that back.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Look I respect you, you know, but my clock's ticking Adonis. It's now or never for me.

ADONIS
Man... I don't know what to say. I wanna help you, I do. But that's just not possible.

DAMIAN
(cooling it down)
You don't know what it's like being in that box all these years. They took away my *name*, Adonis. And they gave me a fucking *number*.
(beat)
I was the <u>best</u>. And I never even got a chance to prove it.
(then)
If Apollo Creed can give a shot to an underdog, why can't you?

Adonis considers, hating to let down a friend and...

44 **<u>INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT</u>** 44

A few hours later, Adonis brushes his teeth. His mind elsewhere. Bianca, in the bath, watches him in the mirror. *

BIANCA
You ok?... You never told me about the group home. *

ADONIS
Nothing to tell...

BIANCA
How old were you?

(CONTINUED)

44 **CONTINUED:** 44

ADONIS
I don't know. Around Amara's age?

Adonis shrugs. Falls silent. Bianca knows she's hit a nerve.

BIANCA
Sorry. You don't wanna talk, it's ok.

ADONIS
Nah, it's not that. It's just -- Dame just asked for a fight against Felix.

BIANCA
(stunned)
For real? He's serious?

ADONIS
Yeah. I declined. I can't just give him a shot. People work their whole lives for that chance--

BIANCA
So why does it look like you're still thinking about it?

Off that question, hanging there...

45 **EXT. SOUTH LA STREET - A FEW DAYS LATER (ESTABLISHING)** 45

TBD establishing shots of L.A. moves us into...

46 **INT. ADONIS AND DUKE'S OFFICE - DELPHI GYM - DAY** 46

Adonis sits at his desk, in his suit. His mind somewhere else. His eyes drift to the gym where we INTERCUT WITH:

47 **INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME** 47

Dame, slogging through another sparring round with Felix. Duke coaching from ringside when... *

DUKE *
Close the distance. Head-body! *

BOOM! Felix lands a stiff hook on Dame. Unnecessarily stiff. It jolts him awake. Damian looks over to Duke, expecting him to call the punch out but... Duke doesn't say shit.

Now Damian's lit. Even hotter when he sees the gym hooting and hollering. Onlookers, now, standing at attention. *

Dame settles into a different fight stance... Beckoning. *

47 **CONTINUED:** 47

When Felix closes in, Dame lets go a hook of his own that lights Felix up... He smirks. *

FELIX *
...there we go Crenshaw! *
Show me something, now... *

DUKE *
Work the jab! Work the jab, come on! *

Felix, takes the coaching. Moves in on a Dame, but when the jab is thrown... Damian knows it's coming. *

And he's had enough, so... *

He slips and COUNTERS Felix's jab and lands a powerful blow of his own, hitting Felix right in an odd position. He staggers back, arm tingling. *

FELIX *
(shaking his arm) *
The hell was that bro! You got a death wish, homie? *

Now it's a fight. The other fighters bound into the ring to separate the Felix. *

47 CONTINUED: (2) 47

Damian waves him off. Unfazed by the fire in Felix's eye.

DAMIAN
You not built like that, lil man. Walk it off.

FELIX
Yeah, keep talking...

Then...

ADONIS (O.C.)
Aye!

Commotion comes to a stop - When Adonis speaks, the gym listens. Adonis, watching from the office, descends the stairs. He goes for Damian who's stepping out of the ring, already taking off his gear.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
What the hell's going on?

DAMIAN
Just me doing my job.

ADONIS
C'mon man, use your head. Leave that shit outside.

DAMIAN
(pointed)
Bro, I told you what I want.

ADONIS
And I told you, it takes time...get some air. Walk off. I'll see you later tonight.

Dame grabs his bag and exits the gym. He passes Duke who is already beelining for Adonis.

DUKE
This was a mistake.

ADONIS
Calm down, it's all right --

47 CONTINUED: (3) 47

DUKE *
No it ain't no *calm down*! You let him *
come in with that chip on his
shoulder. That's how people get hurt.
(beat) *
When people show you who they are, *
Adonis, believe it. *

Adonis considers that for a beat as... *

48-54 **OMITTED** 48-54

55 **I/E. CITY BUS - MOVING - DUSK (LATER)** 55 *

Dame's still running hot as he rides home alone. Life slipping past out the window. He watches it go, with some dark thoughts in his eyes as...

56 **INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME** 56

Duke's making his rounds. Closing down the gym for the night. * (INSERT: DUKE's PHONE SCREEN - "ADT" APP) Sees the light on * in the office, peeks his head in the door to find Adonis' still working.

DUKE
I'm headed out. You handle shit with *
your boy? *

ADONIS
I'll holla at him at B's party *
later... I'm on it, aight? *
(before Duke heads out) *
You seen Amara around? Gotta get her *
to my mom's. *

DUKE
Caught her messin' around with the
heavy bag. Put her on clean up duty. *
(a last thought) *
I know your hearts in the right place, *
man, just watch out. *

Then Duke heads out the door. Adonis rises from his desk, looking out the window to see...

Amara, in the gym down below, studying something on AN IPAD. * Adonis clocks her as we begin to... *

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 56

INTERCUT WITH:

57 **EXT. TRANSITIONAL HOUSE - NIGHT** 57

Damian -- in a hard part of town - a world he's never escaped -- scaling the steps of a grim TRANSITIONAL HOUSE as...

58 **INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME** 58

Adonis approaches Amara in the near vacant gym.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
What you up to, rascal? *

She furtively shuts off the screen, putting the iPad away. *

AMARA (SIGNING)
Just about to start cleaning. *

ADONIS (SIGNING)
That's not what Uncle Duke said.

She looks away, a little chastened.

AMARA (SIGNING)
I don't want to get in trouble. Mom doesn't want me to fight.

Adonis looks around, conspiratorially.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
How 'bout it's our little secret. Want me to show you some more?

She smiles. She does, while...

59 **INT. DAMIAN'S ROOM, TRANSITIONAL HOUSE - SAME** 59

Dame enters his room, setting down his bag on his cot and we pan over the small room.

It's a far cry from Bel Air. His small, tattered dresser is crowded with his clippings: AMATEUR CHAMP. GOLDEN GLOVES. A BRIGHT FUTURE TO WATCH.

We pan past them to find still more personal totems. The notebook. Even THE PHOTO of the boys from Damian's fight long ago. Two young studs on the rise and...

60 **INT. DELPHI GYM - SAME** 60

Adonis stands with Amara at the heavy bag. Teaching. He punches it. Lets it rattle. Amara watches. * *

60 **CONTINUED:** 60

ADONIS (SIGNING, CONT'D)
That's called a straight right.

He hits the bag again.

AMARA (SIGNING)
That's how you knocked out Wheeler?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
(surprised)
Who taught you that?

AMARA (SIGNING)
You.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
You watched that fight?

AMARA (SIGNING)
I've watched all your fights.

Adonis studies at his daughter, intrigued.

AMARA (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
Show me something else.

Adonis nods, ok. Resumes hitting the bag like a teacher. He takes Amara's hand and puts it on the column that the bag's bolted to and begins wailing on the bag with one hand.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Most people think it's about violence but it's not. It's timing and focus and...

AMARA (SIGNING)
Control?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
...yeah. Here, you try.

Adonis steps back and holds the bag for his daughter, like so many people have done for him. Amara hits it. Again.

AMARA
Is that how you do it? Like that?

ADONIS (SIGNING, CONT'D)
Yep. You got it. It's in you. You don't need to be scared. Let's see that straight right. Clean. Simple.
(Amara nails the bag)
Perfect.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2) 60

She punches the bag, squealing with joy. Like she's found her calling. Adonis watches, overcome with emotion as we end sequence on... *

61 **INT. DAMIAN'S ROOM, TRANSITIONAL HOUSE - SAME** 61

Damian. In his room. Like a cell. Doing pull ups on a bar like a man paying penance. Like a shark who can never stop moving as a MUSIC CUE TAKES US INTO:

62 **INT. RECORD PARTY EVENT - NIGHT** 62

A LAVISH, CELEBRITY FILLED EVENT FOR BIANCA'S MUSIC LABEL EVENT. ATHLETES, MUSICIANS, AND ACTORS all posing and dancing.

Damian stands with Adonis near the bar.

DAMIAN
She put this whole show on? That's fire.

Adonis nods.

ADONIS
Yo, grab a drink, I'll be back in a sec. *

Damian watches with envy as Adonis goes to greet none other than VIKTOR DRAGO. *

62 **CONTINUED:** 62

ADONIS (CONT'D)
They told me You never miss a party.
Looks like you put on a few pounds.

VIKTOR
Tough talk from a suit.

ADONIS
Don't let the Dad Bod fool you, now.
The hands still work.

They square up for a beat - cameras flash, but it's all fun and games. Drago puts an arm around Adonis as they pose for a photo Op.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
Hold up, lemme grab Felix--

Adonis gestures and Felix (attending with Laura & Duke) joins * them for a picture. Adonis, ever the promoter, hypes up the fight.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
You see that! Fireworks coming,
November 25th! Get ya tickets!

Dame watching across the room - a glint of envy in his eye.

BIANCA (O.S.)
(over P.A.)
Good evening y'all!

ON STAGE: Bianca looking regal, addresses the party from the mic.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
I'm so glad everyone could make it.
We're so proud of the work our artists
have done this year - we know you're
all gonna love it. As a little treat -
we gonna kick this thing off with one
of my favorites.

Grammy-nominated Artist "SZA" enters the stage to thunderous applause. She graciously takes the mic from Bianca who exits stage left, keeping nearby as...

SZA begins a stunning performance of the song we recognize as the track Bianca was working on in Sc. D29. The audience is enthralled but...

Stage left, Bianca watches wistfully. Singing to herself the song she worked on. It's a bittersweet moment, seen by...

62 CONTINUED: (2) 62

Adonis and Damian, separately in the audience. Each interpreting it in their own way.

SZA's performance continues as we...

JUMP CUT TO:

63 **INT. RECORD PARTY EVENT - A SHORT WHILE LATER** 63 *

Bianca makes the rounds, glad-handing her high profile guests, finally arriving at...

BIANCA
Damian! You made it! Thanks for coming.

DAMIAN
This is one helluva party, Ms. Bianca.

BIANCA
Hope you're having fun. You seen Adonis around?

DAMIAN
Yeah, he's over there doing the dog and pony show.

Across the party, Adonis works the room, Felix in tow.

BIANCA
I'm surprised he even came. He hates these things.

DAMIAN
What's it like having somebody else sing your song?

BIANCA
(graciously of SZA)
If it's got to be anyone...

Dame laughs.

DAMIAN
Come on. You miss it. Don't you?

BIANCA
Sometimes, I do. Yeah. But I still get to make music. I'm grateful.

He gives her a look - *really?*

63 CONTINUED: 63

DAMIAN
(re: Adonis)
You think he misses fighting?

BIANCA
Donnie? Nah. Even if he did, he wouldn't tell me.

DAMIAN
Sounds like Donnie.

BIANCA
Actually- Something I did want to ask you.

DAMIAN
If you wanna know how old Donnie was when he stopped wetting the bed-

Damian drags an invisible zipper across his mouth.

BIANCA
I can ask Mary-Anne about that...

DAMIAN
...oh you wanna know how I got locked up?
(off her non-answer)
It's cool. Got in a fight. Had a gun and some priors... same old story... Donnie was there. He can tell you - things just got out of hand. *
(off Bianca's surprise)
Not saying the dude didn't have it coming, but... You seen what happens when Donnie goes off.

BIANCA
Who was it?

DAMIAN
We called him The General. But you should ask Donnie about that. It ain't really my place.
(knows he's got her)
Like you said, takes "work" to look at the past. I had twenty years to do mine. He'll find his time soon.

As Bianca wonders what that means, we spy...

Adonis, uneasy, clocking their conversation from across the room. The tension building just as...

63 CONTINUED: (2) 63

BANG! Suddenly, a scuffle in the CROWD turns everyone's head. People pushing and shoving. Drago caught up in the mix. It's violent and chaotic. Adonis can't make out what's happening but...

SECURITY is now rushing through, pulling him away from the SCRUM. Doing the same for Bianca. Off the shock on their faces...

ESPN REPORTER (PRE-LAP)
Breaking News out of Los Angeles. Heavyweight Boxer VIKTOR DRAGO was assaulted tonight leaving a star studded event in what appeared to be an attempted robbery.

We PULL BACK to reveal the television in...

64 **OMITTED** 64

65 **INT. ADONIS & BIANCA MANSION - MAN CAVE - MORNING** 65

...where Adonis, juggling THREE PHONES AT ONCE, trying to put out a PR fire, watches CELLPHONE FOOTAGE OF THE ATTACK on TV.

ESPN REPORTER (V.O.)
Drago's currently at Cedars-Sinai having suffered a concussion, as well as multiple fractures to his right arm and hand.

ADONIS
Shit. Anyone get him on the phone?

Into this chaos, Bianca enters, still shaken.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
(hand over the phone)
You ok? This is crazy.

Before Bianca can speak, a MUGSHOT FILLS the screen.

ESPN REPORTER (V.O.)
No arrests have been made but police at the scene took this man, GEORGE REMBLE into custody --

Adonis and Bianca view A HARD-LOOKING MAN in his 40's. Adonis doesn't know him. But know's shit just got complicated and...

ADONIS (PRE-LAP)
Look... these things happen. We just got a find another fighter.

66 **EXT. CHAVEZ FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON** 66

Adonis's car sits parked out front of the Chavez's LA home.

67 **INT. CHAVEZ FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON** 67

Adonis sits with Felix and LAURA in their well appointed home. Duke's here as well, politely keeping his distance but the air's very hot. *

LAURA *
It's not about just finding another fighter.

ADONIS
I hear you. I do. I understand your frustration --

LAURA *
So what are you gonna do? I know he wants to fight Drago, but we can't wait six months till he's cleared. Felix is in fight shape right now.

ADONIS
Only two or three real contenders besides Drago... Ortiz. Sporino. But he's still rehabbing...

LAURA *
So who else, then?

ADONIS
Well... I got one idea.

Duke's knows where he's headed. Already shaking his head.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
It's a big swing but if we hit...

FELIX
Who you mean?

DUKE
He wants you to fight Dame.

FELIX
What? You're for real? He's not even a real fighter.

ADONIS
Looked like a real fighter when you sparred. People talk.

67 **CONTINUED:** 67

LAURA *
Champ, he's older than you.

ADONIS
I know Dame. He's gonna fight tooth and nail.
(beat)
Look, I was a nobody when Conlan threw me a fight.
(sees Duke's head hanging)
When my pop gave Rocky a shot at the title, it changed all of our lives. And it made a good buck.

Laura can see Duke's disapproval. *

LAURA *
You don't like it?

DUKE
This ain't that. Dame ain't boxing, he's fighting the world. He's tryna hurt people. I don't like it. It'd be a circus.

ADONIS
You mean a show? Gotta play the hand we got dealt.

DUKE
Damian's reckless, Donnie. Think about him. (Felix) If this gets ugly, you ain't the one with skin in the game.

FELIX
What, I'm supposed to be scared of this fool just cuz he did a bid?
(turning now to Adonis)
Boss, I don't know if people'll come out to this thing but --

ADONIS
Oh, they'll come out. I promise. They love an underdog story.

FELIX
Well, we trust you. You know that. You say this the move then we move.

ADONIS
Yeah, I say that it is. It was me, I would do it.

67 CONTINUED: (2) 67

FELIX
Then tell your boy to be careful. I know he's your friend, but it ain't sparring - I gotta make an example out of him when I step in that ring.

ADONIS
Just go out, do your job.

Felix and Adonis shake hands. But Duke biting his tongue as --

TDB DAZN ANNOUNCER 1 (V.O.)
Good evening ladies and gentleman and welcome to the Staples Center for tonight's main event.

68 **I/E. BACKSTAGE - STAPLES CENTER - WEEKS LATER - NIGHT** 68 *

Titanic posters hang down the facade. CHAVEZ VS. ANDERSON. Their three story pictures announcing it's FIGHT NIGHT.

At the arena's grand entrance; a RED CARPET is flowing. STARLETS and CELEBRITIES strut past the cameras where...

We land on Adonis, stepping out of a CADILLAC LYRIQ, with Bianca and Amara by his side, strolling inside like royalty. * He gives a warm welcome to SAUL "CANELO" ALVAREZ and his * lovely WIFE. The crowd going apeshit as... *

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
The stars are arriving for a much hyped, and very unique heavyweight title match brought to you by HBO and Creed Athletics between the virtually unknown challenger, Damian Anderson and the reigning WBC Heavyweight Champion, Felix Chavez.

69 **INT. CHAVEZ' TEAM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT** 69

The mood's focused and serious as Felix's hands are taped. Adonis and Duke looking on as Laura prays over Felix... *

70 **INT. DAMIAN'S TEAM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT** 70

Suited up for his fight, Damian watches in silence as a CORRECTIONS OFFICER unlocks the ANKLE MONITOR from his leg.

Adonis arrives in the door in his suit. A CEO not a fighter. Sees the end of this surreal scene.

70 **CONTINUED:** 70

ADONIS
Let you outta those chains, huh?
(then)
You ready?

DAMIAN
Born ready. Gotta thank you for this.

ADONIS
You don't gotta do nothing. Just put on tonight. Aight?

DAMIAN
I will. Thank you.

71 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - NIGHT** 71

CROWDS file to their seats while at ringside Adonis, Bianca, and Amara wait expectantly as the house lights go down.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
And here come the fighters.

Felix emerges from the tunnel with his BELT on his waist, a MEXICAN FLAG on his shoulders, his mother and Duke at his side. No explosions. No lasers. Just a focused fighter making his way through the crowds to...

THE RING, where he enters the ring, standing proud in the spotlight, spotting Adonis in the stands who shoots him back steel then...

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
And now here comes the challenger. A former golden glove champ who's making his professional debut here tonight at the tender age of 36. Quite an improbable story.

Damian emerges from the tunnel with no music. No pomp. No team at his side. Just the cold stare of a killer. He walks alone to the ring and then climbs through the ropes and the fighters meet in the ring.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Damian's giving away three inches in height. Ten pounds in weight. Eleven inches in reach and he's twelve years older than Felix. This has the makings of either the greatest Cinderella story in boxing history or, more likely, a foolishly avoidable massacre.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 **CONTINUED:** 71

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.)
(*alt dialogue to be prepared once announcers are cast.*)

72-74 **OMITTED** 72-74

75 **INT. RING, STAPLES CENTER - NIGHT** 75

The tension is thick. Damian's prowling the ring, like a tiger in a cage. The REFEREE brings them together.

STAPLES' REFEREE (PRE-LAP)
Need a clean fight tonight. Obey my commands. Protect yourselves at all times. No low blows, no rabbit punches, No sucker punches. Got it?
(The fighters nod)
Touch 'em up. Back to your corners.

The boxers hit gloves, both champing at the bit as -- *DING DING*! There's the bell and...

76 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - NIGHT** 76

(Please note - Production will distribute all fight boards, fight viz and materials once approved.)

As the fighters meet for round one, Adonis watches ringside with Bianca and Amara (like Kobe and Gianna) teaching his daughter the ropes of the sport.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Dame needs to start strong. Felix will try and intimidate him. He needs to show he's not scared.

Amara studies like a scholar as we enter...

ROUND ONE

It begins with a bang. Felix charges out like a cannonball, swinging for the fences. A left to the body. Right to the body. A big left to the head and Dame shells up.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
And Chavez comes out like a raging bull, right on top of Anderson, who holds that guard tightly.

Damian slips free and begins doing something we've not yet seen -- he retreats, beckoning Felix to advance. Felix is happy to oblige, coming forward with a flurry of punches in bunches that Dame ebbs and flows with, egging Felix on...

76 **CONTINUED:** 76

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Chavez is showing no respect so far, boring into the body.

Damian whips underneath a feral hook and pivots to Felix's broadside -- Felix goes for a follow-up hook but time slows just enough to see:

Dame fire a QUICK right hand into the soft meat of Felix's inner-bicep...

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Oh! And an awkward punch to the throwing arm!

Felix's arm drops to his side, as he shakes off the sting.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Chavez, you see is shaking that Rolex, probably trying to get the sensation back in his arm.

As Felix goes back on the attack, Adonis teaches Amara again.

ADONIS (SIGNING)
See how he's catching those punches? That's old. It's called Crab Style.

...because Dame's absorb the blow with an unorthodox DEFENSIVE GUARD. He begins to taunt Felix.

DAMIAN
That's all you got? Where the power go?

FELIX
You want some more?

BOOM BOOM!

DAMIAN
(unimpressed)
Gonna be a loooong night.

Felix is goaded into throwing another wild hook that misses, and leaves room for a vicious counterpunch to the ribs that puts him in check.

LAURA *
Stay focused, son! Fight your fight!

Felix tries to reset. Trying to take the offensive. Throwing right hooks at his head, but Dame dodges them all.

(CONTINUED)

76 **CONTINUED: (2)** 76

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Chavez is working that right hand but Anderson seems to be in total comfort. Just waiting for -- WOW!

Cause Damian just swallowed a jab, countering with a torpedo to Felix's side, forcing him to bend down then - BAM! Damian uncorks an uppercut to Felix's chin, forcing him to wrap up.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
A heavy upper cut from Anderson and I think Felix is hurt.

Felix looks a bit stunned. Damian talking shit in his ear.

DAMIAN
You ain't got nothin' I ain't seen yet, boy. You soft. *

The ref breaks the clench but Felix is overwhelmed with rage, succumbing to the taunts. Fires a HARD hook that lands stiff on Dame's cheek. Hard enough to get a bloody smile from Dame.

The BELL DINGS

FELIX
You ain't seen nothing yet!

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
A hard shot from Chavez ends the round and sends both fighters to their corners with some chatter.

77 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - AFTER ROUND 1 - NIGHT** 77

ON FELIX'S CORNER as Laura coaches him up. *

LAURA *
Stick to the game plan! He thinks he's got you mapped out because of sparring. You're better than he is, go prove it! How's the arm?

FELIX
It's nothin. This fool ain't got shit. *

ON DAME'S CORNER as A CUT MAN removes his mouthpiece and squirts water into his mouth. He spits into a bucket and we see a TOOTH ping off the bucket.

CUT MAN
You gotta keep your distance, man...

77 **CONTINUED:** 77

DAMIAN
I don't pay you to talk.

Dame's eyes watch Felix's body closely from across the ring, *scanning.* He clocks Felix shaking his arm again and...

Both fighters rise to their feet for...

78 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - NIGHT** 78

ROUND TWO

Felix and Dame once again meet in the center of the ring. Dame once again beckons for the hungry Felix to charge forward and he does. Felix's flurry of punches, though deadly, are becoming *predictable.* Dame now expertly slips and parries each one, until...

Felix fires a right uppercut that Dame CATCHES with his left, before PUNISHING the injured bicep from before.

FELIX
Agh!

Felix grabs him arm and as soon as his hands drop, Dame rips into his face with a six-punch combo!

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
My oh my and a MENACING flurry from Dame lands six power shots to Chavez's head!

ADONIS
Keep your hands up, champ!

Felix recovers but not fast enough - Dame is on him again, with a sequence of punches that land like pressure points.

LAURA *
Tie him up!

Felix ties up Dame... The tussle taking it's toll on Felix's arm strength. As the ref approaches, Dame hip-pivots Felix away from him and throws a sharp right HOOK - only this hook has a elbow following right behind (the angle obscuring the ref's vision of the blow).

This elbow lacerates Felix's brow sending a curtain of blood down the side of his face halving his vision.

LIL' DUKE
Ref, come on!

(CONTINUED)

78 **CONTINUED:** 78

But the ref saw nothing... Felix frantically wipes at the blood with his left hand, leaving a slew of open targets for Dame to utilize.

BANG BANG BANG. Each punch like a ninja's blade, surgically attacking pressure points on Dame's body like a sniper.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
The cut on Chavez looks bad. The ref's gonna have to step in and evaluate if the corner can't stop the bleeding.

DING DING

79 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - AFTER ROUND 2 - NIGHT** 79

ON DAME'S CORNER as he sits down on his stool barely out of breath. He denies water, keeping his eyes trained on his opponent, the way a sharpshooter admires his couplings. He then finds Adonis in the crowd, approaching Felix's corner.

ON FELIX'S CORNER as a DOCTOR inspects the cut.

ADONIS
How bad is it?

FELIX
It's fine, just get out of my way.

ADONIS
Laura... *

LAURA *
He's okay.
(to Felix)
Mijo...

FELIX
I'm fine! Let's finish this shit. Ima put his ass down.

Duke and Adonis share a look...

ADONIS
Just keep your hands up, aight? Don't let him in your head.

Adonis head back to his seat as the ring sounds for...

80 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - NIGHT** 80

ROUND THREE

80 **CONTINUED:** 80

Felix and Dame circle each other. Felix is careful to keep Dame in his “good eye”, Dame careful to move toward the bleeding eye.

Felix attempts a feint here, a dummy jab there. Dame takes none of the bait.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Chavez digging deep into his bag of tricks, here trying to find something Anderson hasn’t seen...

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
That’s right as many recall, Dame started his career with Delphi as a sparring partner for Chavez, soaking up all of his moves.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
You have to wonder if being Chavez’s body bag has anything to do with what we’re witnessing in the ring...

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
I’d say it’s a safe bet. Dame appears to have the mental edge in round three.

Felix exhausts all other offensive options, seeing no weakness in Dame’s style. He says “fuck-it” and charges forward with a overhand right...

Dame ducks it, countering with a SHOT to the bicep that pulls the muscle straight from the bone.

Felix staggers backward, groaning and clutching the arm.

DAMIAN
Checkmate.

Dame comes forward, left arm extended like a sword, until he’s got Felix cornered. And it’s a blood bath from there.

Hooks and elbows slice into Felix’s face like axes, spraying puffs of blood in every direction. Felix tries to shell up, leaning back and covering his face. Dame begins to expertly PULL FELIX’S GUARD down and STRIKE the open target (a la Vasily Lomachenko) - tearing into Felix at will, until the referee himself is covered in blood spatter.

The punishment continues until Felix drops to a knee. The ref separates them, and Felix is saved by the BELL.

81 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - AFTER ROUND 3 - NIGHT** 81

Everybody is stunned in the seats. Bianca. Amara. Adonis meets Damian's eyes that aren't flinching a bit as...

Felix, struggling back to his feet. Passing Damian with fury.

DAMIAN
You ain't on my level. You soft! Now square up - or get laid out in front of yo momma--

FELIX
What the hell did you say?

A brief shoving match sends both fighters to their corners.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
A wild end to the round. It's nearly bedlam out here.

LAURA
Ref?? Watch the elbows!!

The ref can only shrug - the elbows are being expertly hidden by Damian.

Adonis turns to Bianca with his first look of concern.

IN FELIX'S CORNER

He takes a seat, fuming mad. His face a grotesque arrangement of crimson and flesh. Stitch shoves q-tips deep into the gashes and pinches them closed. Pure body horror.

FELIX
I got him momma, don't worry..

IN DAME'S CORNER

Damian stares him down with a wink. No fear in his eyes as the BELL RINGS AGAIN. The fighters back on their feet for:

82 **INT. STAPLES CENTER - RING - NIGHT** 82

ROUND FOUR

And this one tells a whole different story than the first. Felix proceeds now with complete caution.

82 **CONTINUED:** 82

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Chavez is hanging on by a thread. His determination's a sight to behold but unfortunately the man across from him appears to have murder on his mind. It looks like he's respecting it.

The fighters meet in the middle. Felix tries to use his size and his reach to keep Damian at bay but Dame quickly cuts off the ring, throwing a right that Felix takes on the jaw. Blood runs from every orifice of Felix like a faucet.

83 **OMITTED** 83

84 **INT. RING, STAPLES CENTER - SAME** 84

Dame is still firing - *BAM! BAM! BAM!* - with straight rights to the face that have Felix's head on a spring.

DUKE
Get the hell out of there man!

But Felix stuck on the ropes, shielding blow after blow. Stopping them mostly until...Boom! - Dame lands a jackhammer left that cocks back Felix's head. Blood arcing the ring.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
This might be it...

The crowd gasps at the blood. Felix's whole team on their feet. Creed, Laura, Lil' Duke. Even Amara as... *

Felix pours blood from the gash. He looks ghastly.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
If you're Chavez at this point, you just want out of this round but he's got a long 40 seconds.

But Felix doesn't back down. And the rest of the round's even worse as Felix tries to clench-up but Dame cranks a stunning left upper-cut that sends Felix bouncing off the ropes.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
This is starting to get ugly..

...as BOOM! Damian connects with an arching right hook to Felix's ear that sends him careening into the ropes, his back turned to the ring. Felix struggles to right himself and...

Draped on his stomach over the ropes, he looks out into the crowd as the faces begin to blur. He turns back to the center, spinning directly into...

84 **CONTINUED:** 84

Damian, who is closing in with his fist cocked back ready to perform a coup-de-grace... Only he stops. He lowers his fist and with his off hand, he tips Felix over onto his stomach like a tower of blocks. Felix lands flat on his face.

Dame simply turns and walks back to his corner.

The rest happens in an instant. The entire crowd gasps.

85 **OMITTED** 85

86 **INT. RING, STAPLES CENTER - SAME** 86

Adonis jumps to his feet. So does Laura, terrified. Bianca * covers Amara's eyes. Laura's almost into the ring because... *

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Oh no! You do not want to see that. Chavez is down and it looks like he might be hurt bad.

The ref sends Dame to his corner, calling for a doctor, kneeling to take Felix's mouthpiece out.

LAURA *
Mijo!!

Like a lit match in a forest, sound roars back to the arena. 20,000 people praying they didn't just witness manslaughter.

87 **OMITTED** 87

88 **INT. RING, STAPLES CENTER - SAME** 88

It's pandemonium now. Laura and Adonis flood the ring. * Paramedics right behind them. The crowd all on their feet as the Ref waves off the fight as...

Adonis kneels over Felix. (The image is eerily similar to the notorious shot of Apollo in Balboa's arms.)

The PARAMEDICS pushing through as JIMMY LENNON JR. takes the mic, announcing over the horrific, chaotic moment...

JIMMY LENNON JR.
And the winner by knockout and the new WBC HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION. "DIAMOND" DAMIAN ANDERSON!

As TV CAMERAS and Press surround Damian, he looks through the sea of faces and locks eyes with...

88 CONTINUED: 88

Adonis on the far side of the ring, cradling Felix in his arms. Adonis is totally gutted, watching Dame across the ring. There's twenty feet between the two men, but feels as wide as a canyon as the chaos keeps rising and --

89 **I/E. BACKSTAGE, STAPLES CENTER - NIGHT** 89

AN AMBULANCE IN THE DOCK. Felix is loaded onboard as Adonis and Duke trail behind, shielding photographers from the carnage while Laura climbs in with her son. *

ADONIS
Laura... *

SLAM! -- the doors shut unceremoniously before him, denying the relief of any kind words. Adonis forced to watch as the ambulance speeds off, leaving him with Duke in the hallway.

A long heavy silence. Adonis, just wracked with guilt. He turns to Duke for support, who simply puts up his hands.

LIL' DUKE
I told you.... your mom was right from the jump.

Duke turns and walks off. Stopping a beat later to add.

DUKE
I don't want to see you around the gym for a while.

Off of Adonis, alone. Wanting someone to absolve him and...

90 **INT. CREED MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT** 90 *

Adonis arrives, searching for support. He's been up all night, still wearing his bloody suit.

ADONIS
Hello? Ma, you here?

He discovers her in the kitchen. A state of deep contemplation. A SHOE BOX open before her. She looks very run down.

MARY-ANNE
How's Felix? *

ADONIS
He's stable. Outta surgery now. *
Just tryna give them some space. *

(CONTINUED)

90 **CONTINUED:** 90

MARY-ANNE
Maybe smart. *

Adonis is confused. Then sees the contents of the box. *

ADONIS *
What's all that? *

HANDWRITTEN LETTERS. Dozens and dozens. All addressed to ADONIS. On old PRISON STATIONARY.

MARY-ANNE
Figured one day you'd go looking for *
these. Though, I hoped to God that you *
wouldn't. *

He flips through the letters. One after another. Dating back *
twenty years. It's an absolute gut-punch. *

ADONIS
You hid 'em?

MARY-ANNE
You were in so much pain back then,
son. So much guilt. It was the only *
way to get you to move on. *

Adonis searches for words that don't betray the sinking *
feeling in his stomach. Nothing but adrenaline as-- *

ADONIS
How could you-- ? All this time--? *

MARY-ANNE
It wasn't easy. Carrying this for so *
long... but you're a father, Adonis. *
You'd do the same for Amara. I was *
trying to protect you...

ADONIS
From what? We we're brothers! *

MARY-ANNE
What other choice did I have? *

ADONIS
You let him think I abandoned him. *

90 CONTINUED: (2) 90

MARY-ANNE
And I would do it again. I wasn't watching you get sent back to jail.

ADONIS
Sometimes I wish you would of.

MARY-ANNE
Excuse me?

ADONIS
You have any idea how it feels to not deserve what you got?! You don't know what we went through together.

MARY-ANNE
I know more than you think. I read your files, Adonis. Long before I brought you into our home.
(then)
I know who that man was you two beat up that night.

ADONIS
You don't know nothing.
(sharp)
None of this woulda happened if it wasn't for you!

MARY-ANNE
Watch your mouth. How are you still defending him after what he just did?!

ADONIS
Dame had my back before you even knew who I was... he was just as much my family as you and you took him away.

This guts Mary-Anne. She finally acquiesces, placing a small PHOTO down on the counter.

MARY-ANNE
Think what you want about me, Adonis, I can live with it. But I was just doing my duty as your mother.
(then)
Damian might have had your back once. But he doesn't anymore. I'm sorry.

90 CONTINUED: (3) 90

Mary-Anne exits leaving Adonis to find the PHOTO: DAMIAN - a grown man in jail. Squatted in front of a group of fellow inmates. His new family. Adonis's attention draws to... *

The face of one of the men, whom we slowly recognize as -- THE TATTOOED MAN arrested for assaulting VIKTOR DRAGO.

Hold on Adonis as realization cascades over him and...

91 **EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT - SAME** 91 *

Adonis's car burns rubber through the cold LA night as...

92 **INT. ADONIS' CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)** 92 *

Adonis has a death grip on the steering wheel. Steaming.

He SLAMS to a stop at a red light. Still fuming. His phone RINGING -- it's *Bianca.* One of many missed calls. He considers answering, instead... something catches his eye.

A BILLBOARD OF HIMSELF. The same image from the FORBES COVER. His eyes burn with self-loathing so...

When the red light turns green, Adonis DENIES the call and FLOORS IT. Turning the wheel hard. Peeling out towards...

93 **EXT. DOCKWEILER STATE BEACH - NIGHT** 93 *

A bonfire burning in the sand. Damian's VICTORY PARTY celebrating around it. Dame's holding his belt, drinking straight from a bottle when...

Dame looks out to see a lone figure approaching from the darkness of the parking lot. Adonis. Full of steam, charging forward in his still bloody suit. The image is striking.

He approaches the group and a member of Dame's entourage steps up to impede, but as soon as his hand touches Adonis - WHAM! Adonis floors him with a hook.

ANOTHER ENTOURAGE MEMBER immediately pulls a gun. Dame steps up to deescalate.

DAMIAN
Yo, be cool. Gimme that.
(Dame takes away the gun)
Donnie wassup? What's goin on?

ADONIS
Dame, bruh. Tell me this shit ain't true.
(he reveals the photo)
You *played* me.

Damian does the math. Then, the slightest shift in posture--

DAMIAN
Guess you did get them letters?

ADONIS
You used me. *

The air thickens. No one intervenes - this is Damian's room. *

ADONIS (CONT'D)
I vouched for you, bruh. I put bread up. *

DAMIAN
Hold up-- You put the gloves on *my* hands?
(MORE)

93 CONTINUED: 93

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Man you must be punchy, cuz if memory serves, you used to carry my gloves.

A "*jab*" in return. It lands... *

ADONIS
Duke was right from the jump. Get your shit out the gym. You and me? We through.

DAMIAN
What, you think I need you...?
(beat)
I needed you when I was locked up. I needed you when I came home. But now I'm the champ and I don't need you for nothing. Who's alone, *now?* *

Adonis is cut. He begins to head off.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Yeah that's right. Run away. That's one thing you're still good at it.

Adonis stops on a dime. In a FLASH, his suit jacket is off and his fists are up. FIRE in his eyes. He's squaring up.

The CROWD laughs at the sight. Damian's hands are by his side. He's got Adonis right where he wants him.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Oh you mad now? Take yo best shot, *Little Donnie.*

93 CONTINUED: (2) 93

The sound of that name lacerates Adonis, stunning him. And now Damian moves - lightning fast, feinting a left hand...

Adonis takes the bait hard, and launches into his famed COUNTERPUNCH only...

It's no use. *Anticipating the punch,* Damian slips, pivots, and NAILS Adonis with a booming right hand to the eye. He drops him, sending him stumbling into the surrounding crowd of TOUGHS. They lift him, holding Adonis up by his arms as...

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Straight to the counter, huh? I guess you forgot who *taught* you that punch too?
(kneeling in front of him)
You think that hurts? Try half your life in a cell, watching someone else live your life.
(beat)
You turned your back on me, homie. You didn't answer one call the whole time.

He stands up and taps the BELT.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
This title? This is just the beginning. Brother, I'm coming after it all. *

ADONIS
I ain't your brother.

DAMIAN
(mocking)
You'll always be my baby brother.

ADONIS
And you'll always be a number.

BANG! -- Dame CRACKS Adonis across the eye with the gun, dropping Adonis to the sand, just in mind-blowing pain.

Damian bends down above him, whispering in his ear...

DAMIAN
Help *yourself* up for once. See how it feels.

Then Damian walks off and rejoins his party, leaving Adonis, bleeding on his knees as the fires burn in the night and...

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (3) 93

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Aloha. *

94 **INT. ADONIS AND BIANCA'S NEW BEL AIR HOME - EARLY MORNING** 94 *

Adonis enters. Nobody greets him at the door. He is in quite a state. He searches the house for Bianca and... *

He's surprised to discover her in her studio with Amara. Through the windowed door, Adonis sees this touching scene -- *

Amara's at the end of a meltdown, but Bianca meets her at her level. Stays present, reminding Amara to breathe. It works. * *

Finally, she settles down and Adonis watches as Bianca begins to sing to their daughter. * *

Amara gently holds her hands on her mother's throat, feeling the vibrations of her voice. It's beautiful. * *

Adonis wants to reach out. To open up and confide. He looks desperate for help...

But when Bianca looks up from the booth -- the window is vacant. Adonis is gone. Bianca returns to Amara and...

95 **INT. MAN CAVE, ADONIS AND BIANCA'S HOME - LATER** 95

While Amara sleeps in the studio, Bianca enters the man cave to find Adonis rolling a ball on the POOL TABLE. A bottle of HENNESSY UMBRELLA BRAND and a glass resting on top of the rail.

BIANCA
Where you been? I've been calling you all night. * *

Adonis is silent. His back to her. Still rolling the ball.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
You don't want to know why? Amara got sent home from school. She hit that kid in the face. * * * *
(beat) *
When you retired, Adonis, I thought it was so you'd be present but -- * *

He finally turns, full of guilt. And then she sees his eye.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Jesus! Baby, what happened? *

(CONTINUED)

95 **CONTINUED:** 95

ADONIS
It’s nothing, I’m fine.

BIANCA
C’mon. Let me just take a --

ADONIS
I said drop this shit! *

He swings his body away. Even if unintentional, it’s a little bit scary. They both freeze for a beat.

95 CONTINUED: (2) 95

ADONIS (CONT'D)
I can't do this tonight. *

BIANCA
Ok, then when? When she gets in *
another fight? Gets suspended? *

ADONIS *
That's my fault too? *

BIANCA *
I'm not the one who told her to punch *
anyone. *

ADONIS *
She's fighter. It's in her. You can't *
deny that from her. *

BIANCA *
What are you trying to say?... Baby, *
I've been trying to give you your *
space but it just feels like your *
keeping something inside and... is it *
me? Is it us? Is it...*Leon* or whoever? *

95 **CONTINUED: (3)** 95

ADONIS
Where the hell you hear that?

BIANCA
...Dame.

Adonis is now seeing red. Blood beginning to boil.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
I know you're hurting, Adonis. You can talk, babe. I'm here--

Finally, his rage boils over. Bianca's taken aback.

ADONIS
Whatchu want me to say?! He was the dad at the Jeff.

BIANCA
Adonis I just want you to talk--

ADONIS
I'm not tryna talk about shit!

BAM! -- In a sharp bang of violence, Adonis slams a ball on the table like a gavel. They both freeze.

The moment hangs like a guillotine. And it only gets worse when they discover AMARA, awake in the studio, having seen the whole thing. Bianca runs to shield her from more.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Everything is ok. It's ok. Let's get you back to bed.

She picks her up in her arms and turns back to Adonis.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
You know I love you - I do - but you gotta deal this, D -- cause *she* can't see us like this.

Bianca heads out of the room, leaving Adonis alone. Parked there in shame.

A96 **EXT. LOS ANGELES - ESTABLISHING - A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER** A96 *

Scenic shots of L.A. until we land at the MURAL of APOLLO and ADONIS. He looks regal, but it seems tainted as an unwelcome voice now is heard...

DAMIAN (PRE-LAP)
I don't have any remorse. I don't feel I need to.

96 **EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY** 96 *

Damian walks down a downtown, as he is questioned by an OFF-CAMERA INTERVIEWER. (To be shot in the style of TMZ paparazzo footage). *

TBD BR INTERVIEWER
Not at all? A lot of people think that was a dirty fight. You hospitalized Felix Chavez on national television...

DAMIAN
I don't want to see nobody hurt but you can't come in here half stepping. You ask me, Felix and his team "underestimated" who he was fighting.

TBD BR INTERVIEWER
Does that include Adonis Creed? There's a lot of speculation out there that you two have some beef -- are you still a Creed Athletics Fighter?

DAMIAN
Nah, I got my own team now. Little Donnie and me, we had a bond once before, but now we walk different paths. The only way our paths cross again would be me and him in a ring.

That challenge hangs in the air as... *

97-98 **OMITTED** 97-98

A99 **EXT. ELYSIAN PARK - DAY** A99

Adonis' car is parked on the hill overlooking Dodger Stadium.

B99 **INT. ADONIS' CAR - SAME** B99

Adonis watches the interview on his cell while a CALL arrives on his phone: MOM. Adonis ignores it as...

B99 **CONTINUED:** B99

TBD BR INTERVIEWER (ON TV)
You're challenging him to a fight?

DAMIAN (ON TV)
Nothing would make me happier than to settle up once and for all. But he's gotta be man enough to accept. He wants to settle the score, *Lil' Donnie* knows where to find me.

Adonis shuts off the video, fuming for a long beat until his mind flashes to... *

C99 **A SERIES OF QUICK IMPRESSIONISTIC FLASHES** C99 *

THE JEFF. THE GROUP HOME. YOUNG ADONIS (10) in a bleak home five OTHER SCARED KIDS, including YOUNG DAME (13)... *

WE SEE: LEON. The drunk from the opening. *

WE SEE: TUBE SOCKS wrapped around YOUNG ADONIS HANDS. *

WE SEE: A MATTRESS against a wall. Young Damian demonstrating a STRAIGHT RIGHT. YOUNG ADONIS looking on, an apprentice... *

WE SEE: YOUNG ADONIS hiding under a bed, trying not to watch as DAME stands his ground when Earl enters like doom. *

D99 *WE SEE:* ***EXT. FOREST --*** *YOUNG ADONIS WATCHES YOUNG DAMIEN STRIKE A TREE WITH HIS BARE FIST, SHAKING THE BRANCHES ABOVE HIM.* D99 * *

D99 CONTINUED: D99

His phone rings again, bringing him back to... *

E99 **INT. ADONIS' CAR - AS BEFORE** E99 *

Adonis over looking the stadium, finally ready to answer. *

ADONIS
Sorry ma. I was --

BIANCA
(cuts him off)
--hey baby, it's me.

She can't say the rest. Adonis already knows. A body blow.

99 **INT. CREED MANSION - NIGHT** 99

Adonis enters. Amara and Bianca are there. She hugs him.

BIANCA
You ready to see her?

Off Adonis' shock. His world crashing around him. He looks down to see Bianca's taken his hand and...

100 **INT. MARY-ANNE'S ROOM, CREED MANSION - A SHORT WHILE LATER** 100

Adonis, Bianca, and Amara sit at Mary-Anne's bedside. Weak and sedated; her face pale and slack, almost unrecognizable.

She takes Bianca's hand.

MARY-ANNE
Keep him out of trouble.

BIANCA
I will.

Bianca wipes away tears as Mary-Anne's hand now finds Amara's. She manages a smile, signing her a last time.

MARY-ANNE (SIGNING)
Who's the real champ?

AMARA (SIGNING)
You are.

MARY-ANNE
No. You.

Amara and Mary-Anne share a last tearful look, then Bianca escorts Amara out of the room, leaving Adonis alone.

(CONTINUED)

100 **CONTINUED:** 100

Adonis goes cold, his legs nearly give out. He manages to pull himself to her bedside but not before tears begin to stream down his cheeks. He holds his breath, balls his fists and he kneels down beside her.

100 CONTINUED: (2) 100

ADONIS
I'm so sorry, mom. I didn't mean it, I just...

MARY-ANNE
Shhh. Shhh, it's ok.

Mary-Anne opens her eye just enough to make out his face. Barely lucid, she speaks to Adonis with a whisper --

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
I haven't seen you cry in almost thirty years.

ADONIS
(Between held breath)
How you doing? Tell me what can I do? What do you need me to do?

With tremendous effort, Mary-Anne takes his hand.

MARY-ANNE
First day I met you. You were huffin' and puffin'. Just a tiny little thing but mad at the *whole world*. Like you wanted to go around and take everybody on, one-on-one.
(laughing weakly)
Guess things don't much change. You don't remember that day, do you?

ADONIS
The doctors said--

MARY-ANNE
I remember like it was yesterday. All those boys... all those faces in those cages... and then **you**...

Mary-Anne takes a deep breath.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
I still remember... God. Your face. Had all that anger in you... just like your father... *

Adonis gets choked up at the mention.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)
That's why he fought so hard... but baby-- you got to find another way.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: (3) 100

ADONIS
I know.

As the sedatives wear on, Mary-Anne speaks to Adonis as if he himself were Apollo.

MARY-ANNE
When you left me... I was so angry...
How could you, Apollo?
(tears forming)
How could you leave me alone?

ADONIS
I'm here. I'm right here, momma.

Mary-Anne smiles. A true, deep smile, with her whole face.

MARY-ANNE
Adonis... that's his name. His face--
he saved me. He saved me, Apollo. I
forgive you... You don't have to be
angry anymore.

Mary-Anne shuts her eyes. For the final time. Adonis holds his mother's hand and cries as a MUSIC CUES takes us to...

101 **OMITTED** 101

102 **EXT. LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL CEMETERY - A WEEK LATER** 102 *

Establishing shots of the cemetery. Mary-Anne's funeral is over. Fresh dirt hits the grave above the two tombstones of:

MARY-ANNE and APOLLO CREED

The loss is enormous.

103 **INT. CHAPEL - LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL CEMETERY - DAY** 103 *

Adonis sits in the empty church, his mind being visited by images from the funeral: *

Bianca and Amara grieving, pallbearers, and Adonis standing graveside. * *

They images are interrupted when footsteps approaching behind him. He wipes his eyes to find -- Lil' Duke. A long beat. * *

ADONIS
Surprised you still here.

LIL' DUKE
Where else would I be?

(CONTINUED)

103 **CONTINUED:** 103

But Duke can see that he’s hurting. Alone.

(CONTINUED)

103 **CONTINUED: (2)** 103

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)
You know. Mary Anne was my family too. If her and pops were here, they'd say we need each other now more than ever... We all we got left, Donnie.

He puts a firm hand on Adonis's shoulder.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)
I know you think you gotta be perfect to keep the people you love in your life, Adonis. But that's not true. Not anymore...
(beat)
Family don't run from mistakes. We don't judge flaws. But it's up to *you* to trust people with the real you.

ADONIS
What if it's too late?

LIL' DUKE
It' never too late, Adonis. Just cause you not in the ring, don't mean I'm not in your corner.

ADONIS
So you think I should fight him? *

LIL' DUKE
I think you should knock his ass the hell out... but I got your back either way. Just be straight with yourself. You gotta face him this dude, D, one way or the other -- or else you ain't gonna ever stop running. And that's the last thing she'd have wanted. * * * * * * * *

Off of Adonis, cut right to the bone and...

104 **INT. MARY-ANNE'S HALLWAY, CREED MANSION - NIGHT** 104 *

Adonis enters and flips on the lights, illuminating his MOTHER'S ROOM. Heavy with emotion, he takes in her world.

Her photos by the bed. Apollo. Their children. Adonis, Bianca, and Amara. He touches her clothes in her closet. Her smell still upon them. Then he looks up at...

A shoebox at the top of the closet. Her handwriting: Adonis.

104 **CONTINUED:** 104

He takes it down, opens it. It's stuffed full of photos. Of he and Mary-Anne. At the house. Graduating High School. At his bouts. She's been there the whole time and then...

Adonis finds a keepsake that finally rips out his heart. MARY-ANNE's VISITOR'S BADGE *from the day she met Adonis in Juvie.*

Adonis clutches it like a life line when Bianca arrives at the door. After a beat, she comes and sits at his side. Takes Adonis' hand. They sit there in silence. Until finally...

ADONIS
I'm sorry.

BIANCA
I understand. It's ok. *

ADONIS
I shoulda been honest from the jump. *
It's just...ever since Dame came back, *
all this shit's come back too and -- I
don't know how to deal with it all. *
This shit is easy for you.

BIANCA
It's not easy, Adonis. I'm trying to *
figure it out too. *
(beat)
You don't think it was hard accepting *
that I couldn't perform anymore? It *
still hurts. But I made a choice to *
look forward and be grateful for what
I have. But it's not easy for anyone. *

Adonis sees her with new knowledge. Finally --

ADONIS
That dude Leon. He was the dad at the *
Jeff... *
(the memory hits him hard) *
I'm not saying me and Dame was angels, *
but... We didn't deserve what we got. *

Bianca waits patiently as he searches for the right words... *

ADONIS (CONT'D) *
(then) *
It's my fault Dame went down. I saw *
Leon that night. I'm the one that got *
out the car - Dame was just trying to *
help. *
(beat) *
The cops rolled up and I ran. *

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (2) 104

BIANCA
Baby, you were kids. *
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (3) 104

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Anyone would have run. *

ADONIS
Not Dame. He didn't run. Dame *
protected me. He had my back when I *
was just little Donnie Johnson. And he *
never asked for nothing in return. *
(then) *
And I left him there. *

BIANCA
If you didn't run you'd be with him. *

ADONIS
It's more than that B. I turned my *
back on him. When Dame went away, I *
put all that shit away too. Like it *
was just a bad dream. It was easier to *
tell myself none of it ever happened. *
(beat) *
I left him there and I just became a *
different person. New name, new family *
- a whole other life. *
(beat) *
And now I feel like I don't deserve *
any of it... Why am I the one with all *
this? 'Cuz I had a name and he didn't? *

BIANCA *
Baby, what happened to Damian isn't *
your fault. I know you feel guilty, *
but you have to forgive yourself, or *
you'll never believe you deserve the *
life you've earned. *
(beat) *
Maybe *you* should talk to him. *

ADONIS *
Nah, we're passed that point now. *

BIANCA *
Then maybe you need to fight him. *

There it is. Adonis pauses at this turn. Surprised. *

BIANCA (CONT'D) *
Sometimes the only solution is to *
punch someone in the face. *
(then) *
You guys are both fighters. If that's *
how Dame talks, speak his language. *

Hold on Adonis and Bianca, a united front as we hear... *

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (4) 104

MAVERICK CARTER (PRE-LAP) *
You texted me the night this decision *
was made and I asked you “why now?”... *
What did you say? *

105-116 **OMITTED** 105-116 *

117 **I/E. “THE SHOP" SET - HBO SEGMENT - DAY** 117

The voice -- is MAVERICK CARTER. We’re on the set of “THE SHOP” Maverick and LEBRON JAMES sit in the only two chairs separating...

ADONIS and DAMIAN. Their “face-off”. Damian sits with his CHAMPIONSHIP BELT draped over his shoulder, his CREW lurking in video village.

ADONIS
There are some conflicts that can only be settled in a ring. That’s why I came out of retirement.

117 **CONTINUED:** 117

"Off set," Amara and Bianca look on in support.

LEBRON
Now, Champ - we been boys a long time and you always turned us down when we invited you on. But for this episode we came somewhere special...
(to Damian)
Where we at Dame?

Damian, who hasn't taken his eyes off Adonis yet, speaks.

DAMIAN
City of Angels. You can say this is where I met the real Adonis Creed.

LEBRON
And who is the "real" Adonis Creed?

DAMIAN
A coward.

MAVERICK CARTER
Strong words for two brothas that grew up together.

Adonis returns Damian's glare.

DAMIAN
Plain and simple this is long overdue. *
Now that I got the belt, Little Donnie can't duck and hide under Apollo's bed no more. No more running.

LEBRON
When I hear a man say that, there's history there. Dame we all know your history with being incarcerated, but-- do you think Adonis *owes* you something?

With that, Damian stands up and takes his mic from his shirt before exiting unceremoniously, leaving with his CREW. Adonis grits his teeth. Powers through the moment as...

LEBRON (CONT'D)
Champ?

ADONIS
I don't get into the roo-rah bullshit. That's for the people.
(MORE)

117 CONTINUED: (2) 117

ADONIS (CONT'D)
Me and Dame know the real score. Only one way to settle it.

LEBRON
Run the fade and shake hands after... Gotta respect that. So where's this fight going down?

Adonis, eyeballing Dames as he exits the stage and...

ADONIS
Only one place it can...

The sound of a PLANE SOARING OVERHEAD takes us too...

118-150 **OMITTED** 118-150

A151 **EXT. BIG BEAR AIRPORT - WEEKS LATER - DAY** A151 *

Adonis and his team of Duke, LAURA and BOOG his pad-man, exit a private plane on a scenic tarmac in Big Bear, CA. *

LIL' DUKE (PRE-LAP)
We back, baby. Check it out.

They cross the airport on foot and approach a large indoor AIRPLANE HANGAR situated at the other end of the Airport Base. Duke unlocks a series of chains and opens the sliding gate to reveal a MAKESHIFT GYM.

LIL' DUKE (CONT'D)
Here's home base for the next few weeks. No frills. Just grind. Get comfortable.

B151 **INT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - THE NEXT MORNING** B151

Adonis begins to warm up with a jog around the hangar bay. As he trots, Duke stands in the center of the "gym", reading from a FILE.

LIL' DUKE
Broken orbital bone. Three fractured ribs. Fractured 4th and 5th metacarpals -- on *both* hands. Lacerated kidney. Inflammation in the rotator cuff. Pins in the ankle. Oh yeah, and the cracked sternum.

ADONIS
Naw, I got the pins taken out, remember?

B151 CONTINUED: B151

LIL' DUKE
Oh, yeah. Right.

Duke scratches off that one. Adonis rolls his eyes...

ADONIS
Is there a point to this?

LIL' DUKE
If I know Dame, he's gonna have this list memorized. He's gonna aim at any and every wound. So that's where we start.

..and keeps running.

C151 **EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY** C151

Dame begins his training camp at the legendary MUSCLE BEACH in Venice, CA. Rusted weights, sunshine and onlookers. Dame is laser-focused, not even noticing the extras. He takes a deep breath taking in that crips beachside air and begins to wail on the HEAVY BAG.

D151 **INT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - LATER** D151

Adonis does a mitt combo with Boog. During his combination work facing Boog we see a hook come from behind and Adonis ducks swiftly underneath to dodge the incoming punch.

LIL' DUKE (PRE-LAP)
If you can't recover, you can't train. Can't get better. I called in somebody i think can help with that...

E151 **EXT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - LATER** E151

Adonis and Duke stand in front of two ICE BATHS. A BLACK SUV appears from the distance. Adonis watches in anticipation as the door opens and VIKTOR DRAGO emerges. The sight is jarring...

LIL' DUKE
You trust me, right?

ADONIS
Yeah...

VIKTOR
In Siberia, young boys do this as a rite of passage. Helps to numb the body and prep it for punishment.

E151 **CONTINUED:** E151

He flings off his shirt and plunges in, motioning for Adonis to do the same.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
If you can't handle ice, how will you handle the fire of battle?

Duke looks on and shakes his head before turning back towards the warmth of the gym.

F151 **EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY** F151

Dame bench presses on a rusty bench at Muscle Beach.

G151 **EXT. BIG BEAR AIRPORT - THE NEXT DAY** G151

Adonis's body is nearly parallel with the ground as he leans back, pulling a thick ROPE. We pull back and reveal the rope is attached to the PRIVATE PLANE. He pulls with all his strength, moving the plane wheels only a few inches.

H151 **EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY** H151

Dame does DIPS with a cadre of other BODY BUILDERS at Muscle Beach. He pauses mid-set as his TRAINER drapes giant CHAINS over his shoulders adding more weight.

J151 **INT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - THE NEXT DAY** J151

Adonis swiftly does a MITT COMBO with Boog, before pivoting and begin another furious combo with a second Mitt-carrier, ANN (Felix' trainer); a two-way mitt session.

K151 **EXT. TBD SAND DUNES - DUSK** K151

Dame climbs the SAND DUNES with determination.

L151 **EXT. BIG BEAR WOODS - DAY** L151

Adonis runs through a forest. Tall trees whipping by. He slows before one and...

M151 **EXT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - LATER** M151

Adonis is back at the ICE BATHS. He takes his plunge as Viktor waits. Following under water. We see Adonis's face go from excruciating pain to conveying a strange sense of calm as his body's injuries and fatigue begin to melt away.

N151 **EXT. BIG BEAR AIRPORT** N151 *

Adonis now has strapped himself into a harness, and is on all fours pulling the plane along behind him. The plane now begins to roll at a steady pace...

P151 **EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY** P151

Dame does a GNARLY calisthenic pull-up routine: he pulls himself with enough force to fire off a one-two punch combo in midair at the top each pull-up repetition. Some olympic level cross-fit shit. Meanwhile...

Q151 **EXT. BIG BEAR WOODS - DAY** Q151

Adonis stands before the tree from his run and begins to punch it like a bag, shaking the branches above him, scattering birds in the sky and...

R151 **INT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - LATER** R151

Adonis completes a mitt combo with Anne, before slipping a blindsiding punch and beginning a new combo with BOOG. He ducks another hook and pivots right into a combination with a THIRD mitt-holder. He's in the center of a 3-way mitt combo.

S151 **EXT. BIG BEAR HANGAR - DAY** S151

Adonis and Viktor sit neck-deep in the freezing water. Duke sits bundled up in a folding chair in the cold, holding a stopwatch. He looks down at the time, impressed.

LIL' DUKE
Control your breathing, remember. It all starts with the breath.

Adonis closes his eyes and takes a deep breath in as he quiets his mind.

T151 **INT. BIG BEAR HANGAR GYM - DAY** T151

Adonis jumps rope in a sauna suit. The bell of the timer DINGS and he drops the rope, peeling the sauna suit off, as a bucket of sweat hits the ground at his feet. We see his body's transformation up close as he begins to get in fight shape.

LIL' DUKE
That bell don't dismiss you, I do. Let's go Donnie.

Adonis picks the rope back up and gets back to skipping.

U151 **EXT. TBD LOS ANGELES LOCATIONS - NIGHT** U151

Dame runs through Los Angeles, past LANDMARKS.

V151 **INT. BIG BEAR AIRPORT - RUNWAY - DAY** V151

Adonis lines up in a sprinter's stance, ready to race an unseen opponent. We pull back and reveal that his opponent is... the PLANE he's been pulling.

He takes off like a bat out of hell as the plane begins its takeoff down the jetway. Adonis picks up speed, pulling away, looking fast, until the jet closes the gap and soars past him over head. Adonis slows to a trot.

ADONIS
(to himself)
Almost had it.

He stops and watches as the plane gains altitude, soaring over the lake and mountains and beautiful scenery, shrinking into the horizon.

END MONTAGE as we follow the plane until we're...

151 **EXT. MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT - DAY LATER** 151 *

... where Adonis' car pulls into the SECURE CAR ENTRANCE of a bleak municipal facility.

We recognize where we are. The building comes into view. Where we met YOUNG ADONIS way back in CREED I.

THE YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.

A152 **INT. YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY** A152

Adonis, Bianca and Amara stand in a SECURE ENTRY SPACE.

AMARA (SIGNING)
This is really where Grandma came and got you?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
This is it.

The door slides open and Adonis, Bianca, and Amara enter a hallway where...

B152 **INT. YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - HALL - THAT MOMENT** B152

A DOZEN 10-YEAR-OLD BOYS, mostly black and latino, wearing essentially prison jumpsuits, are marched down a hall by a CORRECTIONS OFFICER.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER
All right. Keep it moving. Hurry up. Don't drag ass.

Adonis watches, remembering and...

152 **INT. YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CELL BLOCK - LATER** 152

Adonis, Bianca, and Amara, now in the cell block, taking it all in. Amara is stunned.

AMARA (SIGNING)
How long were you here?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
Awhile. I wanted to show this place to you both because it is a part of me.

Amara tries to comprehend as some one of THE BOYS double takes at Adonis, recognizing the champ. Adonis nods back.

ADONIS (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
There's a lot about me that I've been ashamed of, didn't want to face it. But I don't want to be afraid of that anymore.

AMARA (SIGNING)
Were you scared?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
I was lonely. I was mad. I had to fight all the time, but you don't. You have a choice. Your mother is right.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
Not about everything.

Adonis is now aware of a commotion building up behind the gates where the boys were led off. Word's starting to spread about who's here in their midst.

BIANCA (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
You are a fighter, Amara. I can see that now and I don't want you to deny that.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

152 **CONTINUED:** 152

BIANCA (SIGNING) (CONT'D)
But knowing when to fight is just as important as knowing when to walk away. Understand?

AMARA (SIGNING)
(to Adonis)
So why are you fighting Dame?

ADONIS (SIGNING)
'Cause Dame's a part of me too. And I can't walk away from that. I gotta face him.

BIANCA (SIGNING)
And we'll always be here to help you face things too.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED: (2) 152

Amara considers, her attention tunes to the swell of excitement erupting behind the gates with the boys. *

AMARA (SIGNING)
What are they saying?

Adonis's heavy with pride as we now hear their chants.

ADONIS
Your name. *

Their name shouted out like a war-cry from the boys in the hall. Again and again.

BOYS
CREED! CREED! CREED! CREED!

Amara turns to Adonis. His eyes well with pride as their name rings out loudly and...

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (PRE-LAP) *
Good evening ladies and gentleman and welcome to Los Angeles for what no doubt will be a night few boxing fans will soon forget.

A153-X153 **OMITTED** A153-X153

153 **EXT. DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 153

-- soaring over East L.A. Traffic choking the free ways as thousands of headlights peel off toward...

The historic OUTDOOR BASEBALL STADIUM where the floods lights illuminate an infield converted into a BOXING ARENA.

Thousands of roaring FANS pack the field and the stands. The scale is just staggering as we land on:

TWO TBD DAZN ANNOUNCERS broadcasting ringside.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER *
I'm *TBD ANNOUNCER* here alongside *TBD ANNOUNCER 2* for one of the most anticipated heavyweight bouts in years. A meeting of two hometown heroes meeting in the ring to settle old scores.

153 **CONTINUED:** 153

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 *
One hundred percent, Jim. Adonis Creed, stepping out of retirement to take on his childhood friend and the new, and very controversial Champion, “Diamond” Dame Anderson.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER *
You’re referring of course to the now infamous beating he delivered to Felix Chavez, which left many in the boxing world critical of Dame’s aggressive, contentious style. Not since Ali vs. Foreman have two fighters brought this much animosity into the ring. It feels like trial by combat. Let’s hope nobody gets hurt.

That hope feels pretty fragile as...

154 **INT. CREED’S LOCKER ROOM - DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 154

Adonis is getting taped up. Just like the old days. All black tape. All black shorts. Stripping it all back to basics. He * looks up to see two visitors silently enter the room - FELIX * and LAURA. Both give him a nod of encouragement. While- *

155 **INT. DAME’S LOCKER ROOM - DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 155

And it’s the same routine here. Dame is warming up with A SPARRING PARTNER. His concentration, still frightening as...

156 **EXT. DODGER STADIUM - NIGHT** 156

The arena lights go dark. The crowd quiets to a hush as a single spotlight illuminates the center of the ring where...

The mic descends and the ANNOUNCER steps forward to meet it.

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentleman. Welcome to the main event for the Heavyweight Championship of the World!

157 **INT. STADIUM TUNNELS - SAME** 157

The ROAR OF THE CROWD is heard in the tunnels where Adonis, Duke and team make their way from the locker room toward...

158 **EXT. FIELD, DODGER STADIUM - SAME** 158

...where they get their fist view of the packed stadium. The infield blanketed with fans and dead in the center...

158 **CONTINUED:** 158

THE RING bathed in light. Awaiting its fighters. Both holy and intimidating. Adonis views it from the tunnel.

DUKE
Just like riding a bike.

Adonis does not look convinced as the announcer continues.

ANNOUNCER
In the red corner. Weighing 210 pounds. From Crenshaw, California. A former Golden Gloves winner and the current WBC Heavyweight Champ -- “Diamond” Damian Anderson.

Adonis grits his teeth as the crowd roars and Damian heads toward the ring, COMPLETELY ALONE - nothing but a HOTEL TOWEL draped over his head and shoulders a la TYSON...

He circles the ring like a Great White Shark, keeping his eyes glued into Adonis - a predator circling his prey.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
That is the face of a man with one thing on his mind. Vengeance.

Damian climbs into the ring, summiting his stage. A moment he’s waited twenty years to arrive. He steels himself as...

ANNOUNCER
And in the blue corner, the challenger. Fighting out of the Delphi Gym in Los Angeles, California. Weighing in at 212 pounds, with a record of 28 victories and only one loss. With 25 KOs. The former Light Heavyweight Champion of the World and Former RING, IBC, WBO, WBC Undisputed Heavyweight Champion of the World, Adonis Creed.

The crowd roars again as from out of the darkness a SINGLE SPOTLIGHT ILLUMINATES...

Adonis and team, flanked by Bianca and Amara, emerge from the tunnel, heading through the crowd.

Amara’s eye full of grit, ready to fight Dame herself as...

Adonis finally reaches the ring, bending to give her a kiss before he climbs in through the ropes where...

158 **CONTINUED: (2)** 158

He sheds off his robe revealing new shorts. CREED on the front. MARY-ANNE on the back.

Laura and a recovering Felix cheer them on from ringside. *

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Creed looks to be in great shape. Guessing he wasn't built like that when you guys fought?

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Definitely not. Thank God.

Adonis looks cut from black marble. The two fighters finally meet in the center as the Ref runs through the rules.

REF
We've already been over the instructions. I expect a tough and clean fight. Protect yourself at all times. Ok. Touch 'em up.

Adonis reaches out to touch gloves -- Damian does not.

DAMIAN
(turning his back)
You're on your own, lil' Donnie. Ain't no one coming to save you.

ADONIS
I'm right here.

With a last look of fury, the fighters head to their corners.

IN CREED'S CORNER -- Adonis tries to contain his emotions.

LIL' DUKE
Remember your plan. He's trying to get in your head. Don't let him. He's only got a chance if you're shook. Remember who's in control.

ADONIS
Yeah. I got it. Don't worry.

159 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - ROUND 1 - NIGHT** 159

Adonis, trying to will himself to believe that as -- DING! DING! DING! The bell rings and both fighters come out.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
And we're off. And the question for Creed is can he shake off the rust?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED: 159

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Three years away and the way Dame attacks could be a rude reawakening and he is not wasting time.

Dame charges out of his corner so fast the REF has to run out of the way as he meets Adonis in the center of the ring.

There's no foreplay here. Dame goes right for the action, but Adonis stands his ground. Doesn't give up an inch as Dame bum rushes again. Staying low. Swinging hard.

BAM! A left hook. BAM! A straight right. Adonis takes both in stride, but this isn't practice. Damian hits like a truck.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
One thing noticeable here is Creed's not backing up. When Dame gets in close to the body, he's not just hanging on. Creed seems to be making it clear he's here to fight.

And he is. Toe to toe. Punching back and not fleeing. It's a dangerous game. *BAM-BAM-BAM!* Damian's power's ferocious.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
You get the sense Creed's making a point. Going toe to toe. Showing no fear. It's a dangerous plan.

LIL' DUKE
Come on, D! Pump that jab!

Adonis does, trying to keep Dame at bay. But Damian never stops coming. Like a rag-doll, he throws Adonis into the corner and BOOM! - connects with a cross to Adonis' eye.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Oh! A right that really got him. He needs to get out of that corner.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
That was a disaster for Adonis.

Adonis tries to wrap up as Dame unleashes a barrage.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Dame connects one of these and it's goodnight, Irene. The crowd's ready to blow.

And they finally do when - BAM! - Dame connects a right that snaps Adonis's head, following with a bombardment of blows.

159 **CONTINUED: (2)** 159

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
And Dame is onto him now. Thinks he knows how to hurt him.

Bianca screams in the seat.

BIANCA
Get the hell out of there D!

Adonis looks like he's in trouble and finally wraps up.

DAMIAN
You can't hang with me, Donnie. I know every move that you got.

And as if proving the point, when Adonis tries to surprise him with a quick upper cut, Damian's two steps ahead. Shifting left, he counters with a huge... BOOM!

A hard left to the nose and Adonis spurts blood!

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Wow! A big left. Creed may have broken his nose.

Adonis wipes off the blood as -- DING DING -- the bell rings and the ref backs them apart.

DAMIAN
Didn't teach you that, huh? Eleven more rounds to go.

ADONIS
Bring it, homie. I'm here.

And they keep yapping like that, heading into their corners.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
After a brutal first round here in LA. You've gotta wonder if Creed's regretting his decisions to get back in the ring. Retirement sure sounds a lot nicer.

160 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 1 - NIGHT** 160

IN CREED'S CORNER -- Adonis sits down on the stool.

ADONIS
That round seem long to you?

160 CONTINUED: 160

LIL' DUKE
Way to hang. Wear him out. How's the nose, is it broke?

ADONIS
No. I think it's ok.

LIL' DUKE
Then stay in and don't dance. If he sees you're not scared, he's gonna start fighting dirty. Keep your head, let him make mistakes, and just wait for your windows. You can take the punishment.

ADONIS
Easy for you to say.

IN DAMIAN'S CORNER

TRAINER
Guy don't want to fight you. He's scared. Keep your foot on his neck.

CLACK CLACK. And they're up, heading into...

161 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT** 161

ROUND TWO

...where once more, Dame starts shot out of a cannon. Adonis right there to meet him but...

BAM! Dame throws a wicked right hook that catches Creed's temple, rocking his world. Followed by another and another. Adonis ricochets off the ropes as the hits keep on coming.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
I admire Creed's heart but he's got to watch out. As we've seen with Dame, it only takes one.

And then BOOM! - there it is. Dame connects with a right hook to the chin that sends Creed to his KNEES!

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
And he's down! What a shot!

The Ref runs to keep them apart but before he can- BOOM! Dame cracks Creed's chin while he's still on his knees.

The crowd goes berserk. Bianca jumps from her seat. Amara's afraid but Adonis is up, signaling to the Ref that he's OK.

(CONTINUED)

161 **CONTINUED:** 161

ADONIS
I'm fine. Man, let's go!

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
He'll have to take the standing eight count as he snaps right up after a late hit that should cost Dame some points. The counts to four. Now to five...

The REF counting it out as Dame chomps at the bit. Thinks he hurt him for sure as Adonis waits beside Duke.

ADONIS
All right. Now it's broke.

LIL' DUKE
You were too pretty, anyway.

Adonis manages a smile as the ref claps them back in.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
This could get out of hand fast. The Ref needs to get control.

ADONIS
That cheap shit is all you got? Can't beat me head up?

Dame comes in pounding again driving Creed to the ropes, and once again, Adonis just takes it. Absorbing blow after blow.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Dame's into him again and Creed's not throwing back. He's gone quiet with his left and he needs it now.

As BOOM! To the body. BAM! To the head. The punishment's brutal only the blows are not sticking. Creed's training pays off and it's making Dame mad. Expending tremendous energy.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Dame wants to ends this right here but he might be trying too hard to land that home run bomb.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
When you're a slugger, you slug.

Adonis knows that, shells up, letting Dame swing himself out.

LIL' DUKE
That's it. Keep him swinging.

161 CONTINUED: (2) 161

...and it's pissing Dame off and when the bell rings again and the fighters retreat, Dame is winded and mad.

DAMIAN
You gonna fight me or what?

ADONIS
That's what that is?

162 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 2 - NIGHT** 162

They escape to their corners.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
There might be a method to this. It's like Ali and Foreman. He's trying to tire him out.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Yeah, but can Creed survive?

IN CREED'S CORNER -- Adonis is spitting out blood.

LIL' DUKE
Let him swing himself out. He's gonna give you an opening.

ADONIS
(exhausted)
When?!?!

IN DAMIAN'S CORNER -- Damian's still catching his breath.

TRAINER
Creed's too old. Just stay on him. He can't take it forever.

Dame is beginning to doubt that as... CLACK CLACK.

We're back in it but before the fighters start throwing, they face-off in the center. Two men alone. Toeing up for a brawl.

ADONIS
Something to say, I'm right here.

DAMIAN
You know how I talk.
(raising his gloves)

ADONIS
So then, come on. Let's hear it.

Adonis raises his too. Only one way this ends as now we...

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: 162

BEGIN TO MONTAGE THROUGH THE MATCH.

163 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT** 163

AND WE'RE INTO ROUND 3

...but this is not like other matches we've seen. As Adonis and Damian exchange blows, everything around them now fades.

The crowd falls into silence. The stadium disappearing into darkness. And Damian and Adonis fight now in a black void.

When Dame forces Adonis into the ropes, expressing his anger with body blow after blow, we're suddenly aware...

THE RING'S ROPES NOW APPEAR AS THE BARS OF A PRISON CELL.

Damian's speaking with pain. Every punch is a cry. A moment of shame he's endured. Pounding them into...

Adonis, who absorbs them, understanding their meaning. Adonis can't believe how much Dame's endured as...

Dame never stops swinging. A reservoir of grief wailing out.

164 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT** 164

THEN WE'RE INTO ROUND FIVE

...and it's more of the same. Dame still burying Creed with blows. But Adonis now counters. Throwing a jab here and there that's begun to connect, working out of the corner and...

We're suddenly aware we're not in the cell any longer. We're in Adonis' head and the ring's now become...

THAT BEDROOM AT THE JEFF. The place of Young Adonis' trauma. He fights Dame in that small room, pushing him back with a strong flurry of combos until...a noise breaks his advance.

THE CREAKS OF THE STAIRCASE sound up from his memories. The footsteps of his tormentor, growing closer and closer and...

Fear returns to Creed's eyes. He suddenly dances away and Dame sniffs weakness and charges, throwing a huge soaring right that smashes Creed's jaw, arcing blood in the air and --

165 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT** 165

NOW IT'S ROUND EIGHT

...and Adonis is bouncing in the ring, bathed in a haunting, yellow light which we now remember...

165 **CONTINUED:** 165

Is the same light on the street from the awning of THE LIQUOR STORE in the prologue where their two lives first diverged.

Like jumping out of the car, Damian rushes into Adonis, smashing into a clench with anger Adonis can feel.

The fighters slug it out as police lights whoop up around them. Their stories pouring out through their punches until --

The DING OF THE BELL brings us back to reality. The sound and ring reemerging as the round and montage come to an end as...

166 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 8 - NIGHT** 166

The fighters return to their corners, bloodied, exhausted, and emotionally spent.

IN ADONIS' CORNER -- Adonis collapses in his seat. Nose broken. Eyes swollen. Looks like he's been through a war.

LIL' DUKE
It's time to take it to him. Show him you deserve to be here.

But Adonis' hardly hears him. His eyes locked in on Damian. Not with anger. Or hate. But now with understanding and...

IN DAMIAN'S CORNER -- Dame's staring back. Like they'd spoke in those rounds. So when the BELL rings and they rise for...

167 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - NIGHT** 167

ROUND ELEVEN

...they are meeting with awareness and respect.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
Both these fighters look tired. It's been ten brutal rounds and they have taken their toll.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
I've got it five rounds to five. Now it's about who can finish and what they've got left in the tank.

And for the first time in the match, both boxers start slow, keep their distance. Summoning will, Damian makes the first move, throwing a big hook, but this time Adonis is ready...

He ducks it and counters on the off balance Dame with a lead right to the head that rattles Dame's skull.

167 **CONTINUED:** 167

DAMIAN's stunned and now Creed presses with a lighting quick combo - whap! whap! whap! - that has Dame dancing back.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Holy smokes! Creed pushed back the champ. We haven't seen that before.

Dame hasn't either. He responds on the attack. Telegraphing a lunging jab that Adonis limbos away from and counters, bringing the crowd to their feet as...

Adonis takes the offensive, pounding Damian's body with just vicious precision and when Dame drops his head...

BOOM! -- Creed shoots a thunderous uppercut that wobbles Dame's knees and sends him into the ropes and...

Bianca goes nuts! So do Amara, Felix, and LAURA. *

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.)L *
Holy cow, with that uppercut. I think Dame may be cut!

And he is. Blood seeps from his eye. Damian tries to respond, throwing Adonis into the corner where...

He starts to unload, pummeling Adonis's body. Setting up a combo and *BOOM!* - lands a straight right to Adonis' eye which immediately opens up. Blood raining down. Adonis' hurt.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
A devastating right hand and Creed's eye's opened up! A dangerous moment now.

Adonis can hardly see. Dame wants to end it right here and just like on the beach, Damian moves lighting fast, feinting a left hand, baiting Adonis to react and...

Just like before, Adonis appears to take the bait, launching into his famed COUNTERPUNCH which Dame anticipates early, starts to slip it as before, but only now does he realizes...

The COUNTERPUNCH never comes. Adonis has faked with the right, waiting instead with a left hook that Damian steps directly into, taking the full force on the chin and -- WHAM! Creed drops him straight to the ground.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
The Champs down! The Champs down!

Bianca and Amara cheer wildly as the Ref starts the count...

167 CONTINUED: (2) 167

REFEREE (V.O.)
One...two...three...four...

Adonis bounces in his corner as Damian struggles to stand.

REFEREE
...five...six...seven...

Damian gets to his knee. Nothing left in his legs and...

REFEREE (CONT'D)
...eight...nine...

At the last second he stands just as the BELL ENDS THE ROUND.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Raise your hands. Come to me.

The Ref checks Damian out, but Dame's eyes stay on Creed, acutely aware what just happened. Adonis, no longer afraid.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
An incredible end here in the eleventh! Creed has knocked down the champ, who looks like he's dead on his feet.

168 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - AFTER ROUND 11 - NIGHT** 168

Damian staggers to his corner. Resolve starting to wain as -

IN ADONIS' CORNER -- Stitch works his eye. Duke looms above.

STITCH
How's the eye? Can you see?

But from Adonis POV: Everything is a blur. A flare of lights. A sea of blood. He can't make out his hands.

Stitch cleans it away but even once the blood's gone, Adonis' vision is hazy. That right eye; just turned off.

LIL' DUKE
Nothing left to prove. We can call it.

ADONIS
You're not calling this fight.

LIL' DUKE
How you gonna fight, you can't see?

168 **CONTINUED:** 168

ADONIS
I'm not quitting, alright? He wants his shot, he's gonna get it.

Lil' Duke knows he can't stop him. Creed gets to his feet. The whole crowd is now roaring. Bianca sees his face and is scared. Duke pulls him aside.

LIL' DUKE
Keep up your right. Protect the eye. Cause you won't see what's coming. You've got this on points so stay the hell out of his way.

ADONIS
I'm not running this time.

IN THE STANDS

Amara watches with pride as her father steps out of his corner and back into the ring where...

Adonis takes in his surroundings. The deafening noise. His vision impaired. For a moment, he closes his eyes and...

Just like in his training, the whole world slows. The flash of the camera. The face of Bianca. The shadowy form of Damian rising off the stool and despite the blood in his eyes, Adonis appears in control and we're...

169 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING** 169

INTO ROUND TWELVE

...and both fighters approach. Both bleeding and broken. They have been through a war that is not over yet.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
Creed's leading on points. If he can just play it safe, he will take back the title.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
I don't think that's in the cards. From the look on Creed's face, this is not about safe. I hope folks at home used the bathroom, cause there's no getting up now.

Because he keeps closing in. Just the two of them now.

169 **CONTINUED:** 169

ADONIS
You want a shot, bruh, I'm here. One round. You and me. You belong here. Come prove it.

LIL' DUKE
(yells from his corner)
Stay the hell out of there, D! What the hell are you doing?

DAMIAN
One round. You and me?

ADONIS
You wanted a shot, come and get it.

Dame considers. Accepts. Adonis once again sticks out his glove - an honorable gesture. Dame, this time, responds. They touch gloves, and square off.

And now the fights on. A slugfest beginning only...

IN CREED'S POV: the view isn't good. Half the frame is just lost in an ocean of darkness and that's where...

Damian strikes first! - launching two vicious jabs that crash on Creed's eye. He never even saw coming.

LIL' DUKE
Keep your hands up and move. Just get out of there, Donnie!

But Adonis keeps closing. Taking another two shots.

ADONIS
That the best that you got? Come on. I said fight.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
I'm not sure what he's doing but it looks like Creed is hurt bad. He didn't react to those punches. I don't think he can see.

And he can't. Creed is fighting half blind but he's been here before and he doesn't stop swinging!

Boom! He lands a right that crushes Dame ribs. Bang! Dame responds with a lethal left jab. It goes on like this forever. Two exhausted fighters, throwing every last punch they've got. They both look like they could fall over.

169 CONTINUED: (2) 169

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
How are these guys still standing?

LIL' DUKE
Get the hell out! Wrap him up.

Duke screams from his corner. Bianca's afraid in the stands. But instead of backing away, Adonis just keeps pressing on into an unseen storm of blows that...

BAM! BAM! BAM! - land with ferocious authority that would put any other man down, but Adonis won't drop.

ADONIS
That all you got? Take me out!

Damian tries to oblige. He pins Adonis into the corner, wailing away and we don't think Creed can stand it...

LIL' DUKE
Get the hell out of there D! Watch out for the 4 - 6.

...because they all know it's coming. Adonis is draped on Damian's shoulder and Dame salivating to end this...

ADONIS
If you want my spot, take it!

...and Dame answers the call. Pouring out his whole heart, he slams Creed with the hook, bending him down to the right, forcing Creed's hands to drop and then...

Here comes the bomb. A cruise missile of an uppercut 20 years in the making that Damian explodes at Creed's chin...

Only -- *just like he trained for* -- Adonis leans back on pure feel and lets the missile soar past and...

Damian's big shot catches air and takes with it his balance and the last of his struggle and...

That's all that Creed needs. *THE REST HAPPENS IN AN INSTANT.*

Damian's still out-stretched from his miss when Adonis counters with -- BOOM! - the biggest blow of the fight. A straight right to Dame's face that shockwaves his skin.

Damian stumbles back to recover but Adonis closes in fast with a left hook to the side that -- *CRACK!* -- breaks DAMIAN's ribs and has the crowd on its feet, cheering...

169 CONTINUED: (3) 169

CROWD
Creed! Creed! Creed!

...and Dame's the one running now. Amara jumps up and down and Lil' Duke cheers, seeing the finishing line coming as...

CLACK CLACK. The blocks sound ten seconds left in the match but Adonis won't stop. He steps under a Dame right and...

With everything he's got left, Adonis throws a straight right that moves like a train right through Damian's face and...

BOOM! Dame drops to the canvas like he's been hit by a truck.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) *
There it is! And he's down!

Dame tries to get up, but his legs are not there. He crashes back to the canvas and the Ref waves it over and...

Adonis remains on his feet. The last man standing again.

170 **EXT. DODGERS STADIUM - RING - POST FIGHT** 170

With Damian still on the ground, the Ref raises Creed's hand as the ring floods with people. Absolute pandemonium.

TBD SHOWTIME ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *
...Creed's the only one standing and once again, he's the champ. I do not believe what I've seen!

Duke, Bianca, and Amara drape over him. Electric with victory. A moment of tremendous vindication. He's supported by family, as through the mayhem he spies...

Damian's still on a knee. Still unable to stand. Only rubberneckers around him. Adonis considers and then...

Through the chaos, Dame looks up to see Adonis watching. Adonis could extend him a hand but this time, instead...

He allows Damian the pride to get up on his own and then...

The two fighters face each other, standing tall. There's no hug and no words, but it feels like respect before...

Adonis' pulled back into his family. Finding Duke for a hug.

LIL' DUKE
Think your mom'd be proud.

The mention of Mary-Anne brings Adonis to tears and...

171 **INT. TUNNELS, DODGER STADIUM - A SHORT WHILE LATER** 171

With the belt on his shoulder, Adonis makes his way back toward the locker room with his family, Felix and his team. STAFF in the tunnels showering him with congratulations.

STAFF
Way to go, Champ! You're back!

Adonis beams. His arm around Bianca. Amara in the other when--

Out of the corner of his good eye, Adonis notices an open door in the tunnel. Damian's locker room. Adonis slows.

ADONIS
Gimme a sec?

He knows she understands. He gives Amara a kiss and hands her to Bianca who watches proudly as Adonis approaches...

172 **INT. DAMIAN'S LOCKER ROOM, DODGER STADIUM - SAME** 172

...where Damian sits with a DOCTOR who examines his wounds. The KNOCK on the door turns them both. Damian looks up surprised to see Adonis in the hall. Long beat between them.

DAMIAN
(to the doc)
Go ahead, man. I'm good.

The doctor departs, leaving the fighters alone. They stand there in silence. Too much to ever say so instead...

Just like old times, Adonis begins to pack up Dame's gym bag.

ADONIS
Here. I got you.

Damian watches this, moved. Finally gets up and stops him. Taking the bag and the burden.

DAMIAN
You don't gotta carry that no more.

Adonis understands. A long beat. It turns into a hug.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
Guess you learned a few moves without me.
(a laugh, then)
It's not on you. Never was.

172 **CONTINUED:** 172

ADONIS
It’s not on you either, bro.

They hold each other awhile. Two brothers. Reunited. Finally, they part with a look...

DAMIAN
Go on. Family’s waiting.

Adonis nods, and Dame watches him exit back into --

173 **INT. TUNNELS, DODGER STADIUM - THAT MOMENT** 173

-- where Bianca and Amara are hanging with Duke. As Adonis lifts Amara onto his shoulders, Bianca’s eyes fall on Adonis’ fists still wrapped up in tape.

BIANCA
You ready to cut those things off?

The question lingers as Adonis and his family head off down the hall. Adonis eyeing his hands for a very long time as we:

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END